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London County Council.

# A REVIEW

OF THE

WORK OF THE COUNCIL,

DURING THE YEAR ENDED 31st MARCH, 1892,

IN

AN ADDRESS

BY

MR. JOHN HUTTON,

CHAIRMAN OF THE COUNCIL,

ON

26th JULY, 1892.

*(Printed by order of the Council.)*



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# London County Council.

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A Review of the Work of the Council during the year ended 31st March, 1892, in an Address delivered by the Chairman, Mr. John Hutton.

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*The Address was delivered at the meeting of the Council, in Spring-gardens, on Tuesday, the 26th of July, 1892. The Chairman said—*

GENTLEMEN OF THE COUNTY COUNCIL,

I am sure we unite in wishing that this review could have been made either by Sir John Lubbock, who so ably occupied the Chair for the period over which the reports extend, and whose distinguished services to the Council both in and out of Parliament we gratefully acknowledge, or by Lord Rosebery, whose speech in presenting a similar review will be fresh in the recollection of the older members of the Council. But under the circumstances it was considered scarcely fair to either of our late Chairmen to ask him to undertake this; and I am not quite sure that adopting the only other alternative for its presentation can be better justified. I am, however, at the disposal of the Council for this or any other work, and can only regret for the Council's sake that it has fallen to my lot.

Before considering the various reports, I shall probably be acting in consonance with your wish, and certainly with my own feelings, if I refer to the loss sustained by the Council in November last through the death of Mr. Haggis, our late Deputy-Chairman. Members who were privileged to know him were impressed with the aptitude he showed for mastering the difficult problems in our administration, his interest in the Council's work generally, and his marked business ability. His sudden and unexpected death was deeply regretted, and the vote of condolence and sympathy with his family was much more than a mere conventional compliment.

An annual review of the Council's work is desirable for many reasons. The extent of the duties covered by its

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Lond. sch. econ. & pol. sci. Ex 1891/92, 99/1900, 02/03, 04/05

committees is so great, and the hours at which the several committees meet are necessarily so conflicting, that unless members are disposed not only to follow closely the weekly reports, but to read the annual report from cover to cover, they are unable to gather any idea of the scope of the Council's operations. I think we shall agree that what may appear to the casual observer outside as a dull monotony in the work of a committee, is capable of considerable relief from the variety of subjects under the consideration of the numerous committees of the Council. If tired of studying the many problems before the Main Drainage department, one may be interested by visiting the Parks Committee to discuss the extension of London's open spaces. Again, if depressed by the consideration that another lunatic asylum is required, a complete change to one's thoughts may be produced by contemplating the most convenient form of seating a new theatre.

Events move so quickly that in this review it may sometimes appear a little confusing when I have to refer to matters which at the period alluded to were in a transition state, but which during the sixteen weeks since the close of the financial year have assumed more precise forms.

Finance.

On the question of Finance the Council is aware that the expenditure on permanent works is paid for out of money raised by the issue of stock, or by the use of the sinking fund pending its application to the redemption of stock. The power to raise and expend money for these purposes is conferred by the Annual Money Act.

The Money Act giving the necessary powers to the Council for the year ended on 31st March last was passed in August, 1891, and was prepared in the same way as preceding Money Bills of the Council, and carried through both Houses of Parliament by the Treasury. On looking at the schedule of that Act I find that power was taken for capital disbursement for the year to the extent of £1,808,219, for specified purposes, and, as is inevitably the case, the disbursements were much smaller, amounting in gross to £612,000, made up as follows :

—Main Drainage Precipitation Works and Sludge Ships, £170,000 ; Asylums, £153,000 ; Street Improvements, £116,000, Bridges, Tunnel, and Ferry, £75,000 ; Parks, £46,000 ; Housing of the Working Classes, £24,000 ; Fire Brigade, £22,000 ; Electric Testing and Weights and Measures, £6,000.

The gross sum was reduced by exceptional receipts from the Charity Commissioners, Local Authorities and others towards parks and open spaces, to the extent of £155,000 ; leaving the net capital disbursements of the year at £457,000.

The same Act gave power to the Council to advance to local authorities £1,170,000, the amount actually advanced being £785,000.

The Council during the early months of 1892 prepared the Money Bill for the year 1892-93. New Standing Orders of the House of Commons now necessitate the Money Bill being introduced by the Council as a private bill, and the estimates have, in consequence, to be prepared in greater detail, to enable the Council to substantiate them before a Select Committee.

The various spending committees of the Council have considered the question of their probable requirements, and the aggregate of their estimates for 1892-3 runs into very large figures, namely, for capital disbursements, £2,340,000, and for loan, £1,420,000, together, £3,760,000 ; but, judging from previous experience, it is not at all probable that these sums will be reached, as in all cases the *possible*, rather than the *probable*, disbursement has to be provided for.

Having dealt with the capital disbursement, we now turn to the maintenance charges, and the charges consequent upon our debt, which as you are aware are paid out of the rates. The rate for the year 1891-92 was 11½d. in the £. This compares favourably with the rates for the two earlier years, which were 1889-90, 12½d., and 1890-91, 13¼d.

In the amount of the rate from year to year is seen the entire annual cost of the Council's administration, that is to say, in it are included the proportion of the sinking fund for debt and

the interest on debt, as well as the recurring maintenance charges of all kinds.

The 11½d. rate may be briefly analysed thus :—

	d.
For old county services ... ..	1·63
For the 4d. per head for indoor paupers	2·39
For all other services (including cost of debt) ... ..	11·06
	<hr/>
	15·08
Less increase in balances, brought forward ... ..	·84
• And receipts from licence, pro- bate, beer, and spirit duties	2·49
	<hr/>
	3·33
	<hr/>
	11·75
	<hr/> <hr/>

It is reassuring, in view of the increased disbursements the Council may be called upon to make, to observe that the ratable annual value of the county continues to grow, and is now over 1¾ millions greater than it was in 1889–90, and that a penny rate produces about £139,000.

The Council, I am sure, appreciates the able services of Mr. Evan Spicer as our Chancellor of the Exchequer.

Asylums.

In considering the report of the Asylums Committee, the Council will note that on the 1st of January last there were no less than 10,508 lunatics for whom the London County Council is primarily responsible to provide accommodation. In addition to the asylums at Banstead, Cane-hill, Colney-hatch, and Hanwell, and that in course of erection at Claybury, the Committee, by authority of the Council, has advertised for a site for a new asylum to accommodate not less than 1,000 patients. The cost involved in the maintenance of the asylum system is a serious charge upon the county, but the obligation to provide asylums for these unfortunate people is, of course, beyond all argument; and it must be a matter of great satisfaction to the Council to find that the administration of the asylums has been conducted



on a sound and humane basis. The addition of many comforts to the patients has been secured, and the interests of the officers and servants have not been neglected.

The Bridges Committee, whose report comes next in order, Bridges, brings to our recollection the large expenditure involved in connection with the Blackwall Tunnel. The contract of Messrs. Pearson and Son for £871,000 having been accepted, the Council adopted the recommendation of the Committee that it would be true economy (having regard to the future wants of the community of the East of London) to acquire the land necessary for a second tunnel, especially as the property, if acquired, could be allowed to remain occupied, producing a return on the investment until required, the estimated cost for such provision being £20,000. In connection with the Blackwall Tunnel several sites have been set apart for the purpose of erecting dwellings for the working people displaced by the construction of the tunnel. The Council, having failed to find a purchaser for the land under the conditions proposed, has undertaken to erect the buildings itself.

With respect to the Woolwich Ferry, also under the care of the Bridges Committee, marked increase in the traffic has naturally resulted from the increased facility of transit, and the daily average of vehicles conveyed across the river exclusive of Sundays is 756. The maximum number of vehicles crossing on any one day was 1,044. Arrangements have been made to give the members of the staff employed at the ferry one day off in seven.

The dangerous condition of Vauxhall-bridge is a matter which is forcing itself upon the immediate attention of the Council. It is also reported that Lambeth-bridge is in an unsatisfactory condition, but there is hope that the Committee may see its way to allow breathing time to the Council before asking powers for this further work. Vigorous measures have been taken to fulfil our obligation with respect to keeping the Thames flood works in order. The Council has important responsibility respecting

its ferry and bridges. Without entering upon an argumentative subject, it is worthy of note that, while the Corporation has no less than seven representatives upon the Thames Conservancy, the Council with its 41 miles of river frontage has not a single representative upon that body.

Building Act. The report of the Building Act Committee, in which, from my three years' chairmanship of that committee, I may be excused for feeling special interest, bears its usual characteristic of voluminous applications upon an immense variety of subjects in connection with building law administration. The claim upon the time and energy of Dr. Longstaff as Chairman of that Committee is most loyally and willingly discharged. Although by the Public Health (London) Act, 1891, the supervision of underground rooms has been transferred from this Committee to the local authorities, a transference which I trust may not result in the lack of vigorous action against cellar dwellings, yet in place of that duty the Committee has been weighted with an obligation under the Factory and Workshop Act, 1891, such obligation being to ascertain whether factories are provided in storeys above the ground floor with such means of escape in case of fire for persons employed therein as can reasonably be required under the circumstances of each case. To enable the Council to in any sense realise what this obligation involves, it will only be necessary to state that the list of existing factories in London to which in the large majority of cases the Act will apply consists of no less than 1,400. Desiring to judge for myself of the absolute necessity for such intervention, which a few years since would have been regarded as an undue interference with the rights of the subject, I accompanied the sub-committee on its first view, and I am bound to say that if there were no other cases in London calling for interference those seen by the sub-committee upon that occasion would in my judgment justify the new legislative enactment. Thousands of young persons will by it not only obtain increased security in case of fire in the building in which they are employed, the sole object of

the provision, but incidentally will obtain increased comfort and facility in the performance of their duty. I commend this subject to the judicious and vigorous action of the Committee. The Committee have taken proceedings in 2,656 cases of dangerous structures, and have caused the demolition of a considerable number of ruinous and dilapidated houses. I am glad, from personal observation, to note that the alteration approved by the Council in requiring District Surveyors to devote the whole of their time to the service of the Council has worked in a satisfactory manner.

The Corporate Property Committee, having control of the ground rents and surplus land estimated at the value of £2,266,547, has done an immensity of work. The question of dealing with the Council's surplus land has been considered by the Committee, and the Council has decided that as a general rule it is undesirable to sell its ground rents, but that when exceptional cases arise whereby the Council would on a sale obtain substantial pecuniary advantages the land should be sold. It has also been decided that land acquired for new improvements shall not be sold immediately, but that leases shall be granted at ground rents to be fixed, such ground rents to be dealt with in the manner suggested. The Parliamentary Committee has, moreover, been instructed to apply to Parliament to confer power on the Council to lease land with an option to the purchaser at the termination of the lease to renew at a valuation of the land only, exclusive of improvements made by the tenant. It is remarkable that no less than 11 cases of fire have occurred in the past year on property leased by the Council. In all these cases the premises have been properly reinstated under the covenants of insurance. The subject of charities and endowments has received due attention at the hands of this Committee, and the various schemes in connection with the City Parochial Charities Act have been considered. On the new Polytechnics one or more members of the governing body have been nominated by the Council. We have now representatives upon the Regent-street Polytechnic, the Northampton Institute, Clerkenwell,

Corporate  
Property.

the Battersea Polytechnic, the Borough-road Polytechnic, the South Western Polytechnic, the People's Palace, and the Northern Polytechnic. The Committee has also examined the drafts of various other schemes, and with the approval of the Council has submitted to the Commissioners various objections or suggestions where they appeared to be called for. One very important resolution passed by the Council, at the suggestion of this Committee, was a resolution referring it to the Parliamentary Committee to insert a clause in one of the Council's bills making it obligatory on the vestries instead of as at present optional, to forward annually to the Council copies of returns as to charity property belonging to the several parishes and under the control of the vestries for the use of the ratepayers.

Fire Brigade.

The Fire Brigade Committee in the selection of sites for new stations shows not only its anxiety for the preservation of property but for the preservation of life. Arrangements have been made for the erection of stations in Wandsworth, East Dulwich, New Cross, Brompton, and on the west side of London-fields, Hackney. The Committee has also dealt with the inconvenient and expensive practice of obtaining lodgings for the men outside the station, and recognises the value and the economy of having the men on the spot. In the case of the staff attached to the river station at the Cherry Garden Pier, Rotherhithe, a building is in course of erection to accommodate all the men belonging to that station. Several existing fire stations have been enlarged. The remuneration of the staff has been reviewed, and a most liberal and in fact generous increase made in the rates of pay as well as a reduction of the period of service. An engineer who entered the service as a fireman say at twenty-two years of age, may, after a service of twenty-eight years, retire at fifty with a pension of two-thirds of his salary, amounting to £2 4s. 8d. per week, or £116 per annum. The retirement of Sir Eyre M. Shaw from the brigade met with due acknowledgement from the Council, and the appointment of Mr. Simonds, his successor, has proved to be satisfactory. The meritorious



conduct of G. W. Byne, a fourth-class fireman, in rescuing a woman on the occasion of a fire at Brompton-road, gained for him a silver medal for bravery; and I feel sure that the Council will agree that the conduct of this fireman is not only in itself to be approved, but is valuable as an incentive to men placed in similar positions to behave in the same brave and commendable manner. The augmented staff of the Brigade brings the number up to 825 men of all ranks, and the cost of its maintenance amounts to £128,783. Every aid which science can render by electric and telephonic communication between different stations, and by other time-saving means, the Committee is fully alive to. The number of points at which an alarm can be given is 520, an increase of 129 on those existing when the Council came into office; the number is being steadily added to. The false alarms communicated by means of the alarm-posts are very numerous, and a considerable proportion of them are no doubt given by persons who do not realise the serious danger in which their action may result should a genuine call be received at a station whilst the men and engines are away in response to a false alarm. A few offenders have been detected and dealt with in an exemplary manner by the magistrates, but the brigade continues to be harassed by malicious calls. If the offence is made penal, and every good citizen will lend his aid to the Council in the suppression of this dangerous and vicious practice, we shall soon remedy the evil. Efficient help from the brigade during the first five minutes of a fire is of greater importance than the projection of tons of water upon the flames when they have made headway. The percentage of serious fires in the London of 1882 was nine, whereas in the London of 1891, with its extended streets and consequent increased risk, it was only seven. One may incidentally remark that, while London gains enormously by this reduction in loss of property, the fire insurance offices must have gained prodigiously in their dividends. I hope that the time is not far distant when the first-class fire insurance offices of London may in view of this, and of the reduced risk from the introduction of electric

lighting, together with the more stringent carrying out of the building laws and the provision of thousands of fire hydrants, see their way to a reduction of premiums. There were 16 cases last year in which the arrangements of the water companies for the water supply at fires were unsatisfactory. Five cases were those of short supply of water, 8 of late attendance of turncocks, and 3 of no attendance at all. The late Metropolitan Board did not exercise its powers of calling upon the water companies to provide a constant supply of water under the Water Act of 1871; but the Council has put that power into force, and as a result the number of hydrants has largely increased and now amounts to no less than 13,018, so that it is not remarkable that this item should form a frequent subject of discussion in regard to the expenses of the Fire Brigade Committee.

#### Highways.

The next Committee coming under review is that of the Highways. The Council will remember that this Committee has a certain control under the Electric Lighting Acts and Orders, the latter of which have during the past year largely increased in number. Notices of plans of works in streets have to be served on the Council, and the Council may exercise its jurisdiction within one month in approving the same, or in imposing conditions. An electric meter-testing station has been established at considerable expense, the apparatus required for testing costing no less a sum than £2,423. The question of the purchase of the tramways is also within the reference of this Committee, and the arbitration upon the acquisition of the first section of the line where the powers of the Council can now be exercised is proceeding. No doubt the question of the acquisition by the Council of the tramways of London is one fraught with considerable difficulty, and one into which the Council would not, I am sure, wish me to enter more fully. Members of the Council desiring to acquire an intimate knowledge of the subject will find a ready way of doing so by reading Mr. Bassett Hopkins' hand-book, printed by order of the Committee, in which a dry subject is made most interesting by concise

and efficient treatment. Protection to life has been afforded by the erection of iron standards, with removable chains, at the landing stairs leading from the Chelsea-embankment to the river, and a danger to foot-passengers in crossing the carriageway opposite the entrance to the Charing-cross station of the District Railway has been considerably reduced by the erection of a refuge in the centre of the road.

The removal of bars and gates under the Act of 1890 is proceeding slowly, the Vestry of St. Pancras having adopted the prudent course of reconstructing the sewers in the district immediately affected before the removal of further gates. The gates in Sidmouth-street and in Upper Woburn-place have already been removed. The Council, having secured the passing of the London Overhead Wires Act of 1891, after a stormy passage, stands, I fear, the prospect of losing most of the benefits of that Act by the powers which the Postmaster-General will acquire if the lines are transferred to the Government. The only consolation we have is that in the hands of a public department the maintenance of these wires may be better secured than as at present in the hands of private companies. It is a satisfaction to know that in all recent Acts of Parliament authorising the construction of railways through the metropolis it is provided that before any bridges are permitted, plans of them shall be submitted to the Council for approval. This Committee also has referred to it the question of the closing of streets for repair by the local authorities. During the past year the temporary closing, either wholly or partially, of 314 thoroughfares was ordered by the Council. I am not sure that we exercise sufficient discretion over that matter, having due regard for railway and other special season traffic. It is, we know, a standing complaint with the London ratepayer that the most important thoroughfares are closed at the most inconvenient time of the year. It may be that so congested is London's vehicular traffic generally, that the question may not so much turn upon the time chosen as upon the fact that any time must of necessity be inconvenient. I, however, in

passing, think it my duty to direct the Committee's attention to this matter that if anything can be done to mitigate a grievance we should endeavour to accomplish it.

Improve-  
ments.

The Improvements Committee has in the past year devoted much attention to the elaboration of seven important improvements:—The construction of a bridge and approaches at West Cromwell-road, the widening of the Strand, the construction of a new street from Holborn to the Strand, the formation of a southern approach to the Tower Bridge, the construction of a northern auxiliary approach to the same bridge by way of Sandy's-row, the removal of Bozier's-court, and the widening at various congested points of the Albert Embankment along the line of thoroughfare to York-road, Battersea. The Council is familiar with the fact that the desire to readjust the burdens of rating has stood in the way of most of these schemes; but it is an evidence of the progress made in the consideration of this problem that all political parties outside the Council, and all diversity of thought inside the Council, seem to centre in one common opinion that something must be done. The truth of the words coming down to us through the ages that “the profit of the earth is for all, the King himself is served by the field,” is fastening itself upon the attention of thoughtful men. When we come to the consideration of the methods to be adopted, divergent views begin to find expression, and it is not my purpose to-day to attempt to indicate a probable solution of the difficulty. I would only remind the Council that the ratepayer of London if weighted with the entire cost of these and other improvements will find it a heavier burden than in my judgment he should, unaided, be called upon to bear.

Industrial,  
&c., Schools.

With regard to the work of the Industrial and Reformatory Schools Committee, it must be a matter of congratulation that many improvements have been effected. The health of the boys in these schools has greatly improved by the adoption of warmer clothing as a means of reducing the excessive liability to pulmonary affections previously reported, and partly, I think, as a consequence of improved health, the discipline



has been more readily maintained. The exceptional report that there has been no case of absconding from the school during the past year is the best proof of a wise administration.

The Local Government and Taxation Committee have before them difficult and arduous duties. In their table A they state the increases in assessments made and confirmed by the Court; in table B, the increases agreed but not yet confirmed, and it is not until we come to table C, with the increases claimed but no settlement arrived at, that we find ourselves face to face with a grave difficulty. The Council will, I am sure, endorse the view that resistance to our opinion with regard to assessment value does not necessarily prove that we are wrong. The voluminous character of these appeals, and the enormous cost and time consumed in the settlement of claims, may point to the Council seeking a more expeditious mode of arriving at a settlement. The Committee has had, on behalf of the Council, to conduct appeals against over-assessment of the Council's property, and this, by some persons, may be regarded as a Nemesis upon the Council with respect to its action against under-assessments. The arrangements for polling stations have formed part of this Committee's duty, and satisfactory amendment has been made in a large number of districts, thus obviating serious local inconvenience. I am glad to see that the Committee attaches importance to the statistical branch of its work, and the creation of a statistical office in the Comptroller's department will, in the future, without doubt greatly facilitate the collection and preservation of information, often of vital interest to the community.

The Main Drainage Committee has a most important duty to fulfil, and although it is not desirable to bring within this review any facts that have come to light since the period with which the report deals, yet one cannot refrain from congratulating the Committee upon the evident improvement in the condition of the Thames, satisfactory proof of which was adduced at a recent meeting of the Council. Mr. Howell

Local Govern-  
ment and  
Taxation.

Main  
Drainage.

Williams, the Chairman of the Committee, takes a personal and practical interest in the work, upon the technicalities of which he has become an authority. Additional sludge vessels have been ordered during the past year, and the amount of sludge taken out to sea has assumed proportions which, in the opinion of those competent to judge, will after the next winter floods, make still more evident the improved condition of the river.

The sewage of London cannot be deodorised for nothing, and the cost of the chemicals used in the process last year amounted to £27,525.

Sewer relief works have been undertaken, so that the unfortunate residents in the districts affected by flooding have in prospect a better condition of things. The rickety and antiquated gear of the pumping-stations has been superseded by new plant, and the whole system put into a smart and capable condition, worthy of the magnitude of the interests involved. Proof that efficiency means economy is given in the fact that at the Abbey-mills station for the pumping of practically the same quantity of sewage, a saving of 2,000 tons of coal has been effected in the year's work by reason of the perfection of the pumps and other working gear. The mischievous practice of sweeping mud into the sewers is on the increase. We must not despair that local authorities or their contractors may abandon it, on a knowledge of the great injury done, or, failing that, by a more vigorous application of penalties. Unfortunately the practice is so remunerative to contractors that it is quite easy to contemplate a contractor paying a fine imposed upon the sweeper and taking the balance of profit to himself. If we had power to send the sweeper to prison, without the option of a fine, or better still, the contractor, no doubt the practice would be discontinued.

Parks and  
Open Spaces.

We now come to the consideration of our Parks and Open Spaces Committee. Time would fail me to tell of the additions to London's open spaces since the creation of the Council. The condition of the parks and open spaces under the control of the Council is admittedly most satisfactory.

The promotion of games and pastimes is a very pleasant feature of this work ; last year there were no less than 6,700 pitches allotted for the playing of cricket, and over 1,000 football grounds, together with the provision of gymnasium arrangements for children. To obviate the necessity of the players in the various games visiting public-houses to change their clothing, dressing-rooms have been arranged in several of our parks. Shelters have also been erected for the convenience of bathers. A new departure has been made in providing for the performance of bands of music, which has given general, if not universal, satisfaction ; 446 performances were given last year. In the matter of refreshments the Council's moderate tariff has been adopted, greatly to the advantage of the public. The wages of the numerous staff employed in and about our parks and open spaces have been readjusted. For gardening work, the year has been divided into three winter months and nine summer months, which I think is perhaps an undeserved compliment to our climate. The wages of the men have been fixed at 24s. per week of 48 hours during the winter months, and 25s. per week of 54 hours during the summer months. Other grades of workers have been duly considered.

The arduous labours of the Parliamentary Committee and of Mr. Charles Harrison, its chairman, "are known of all men." Not only has the Council in the past season promoted six bills of first importance to London, but the Committee has been actively engaged with four other bills affecting the Council, and in addition to this a vast number of measures affecting the interests of London have received the careful consideration of the Parliamentary Committee. Amongst these Bills the most important have undoubtedly been electric and cable railway schemes, which were very fully considered by the Parliamentary Committee, whose views, when approved by the Council, were submitted to a joint Committee of both Houses of Parliament appointed to consider the matter. Another very important scheme under consideration was that of the Manchester, Sheffield and Lincolnshire Railway Company, who proposed to acquire an extensive site in St. John's-wood and

Parlia-  
mentary.

neighbourhood for the purpose of a terminal station. A similar though more extensive scheme was defeated last year mainly through the action of the Council, and it is a matter of regret that the bill of this year has passed into law. The objections of the Council were, not to the introduction of a new line to London, but to the site chosen for a station, affecting as it does one of the most open districts of London. Some important modifications and amendments in the bill were secured by the Council.

In connection with parliamentary matters, it may be convenient to mention here the Water Bill promoted jointly by the Council and the City Corporation. The measure was prepared in the first instance by the Parliamentary and Special Water Committees in conference with the County Purposes Committee of the Corporation, but subsequently the conduct of the bill was referred to a joint Committee, and later to the Special Water Committee, under whose care it has passed through Parliament. The same Committee is conducting the case of the Council before the Royal Commission on Metropolitan Water Supply which was appointed by Her Majesty's Government in January last in consequence of the representations made by the Council.

Comment both inside and outside the Council has been made upon the expenditure involved in the conduct of our parliamentary work, but for any accurate estimate to be made it will be apparent that our critics must take into consideration the extent of the work done, and must not judge of the expenditure only by the successes which have in many instances happily attended the Council's proceedings, but must assign some value even to our failures. It is impossible that a department of this magnitude can be successful with every bill promoted by the Council, and it sometimes becomes our duty, as the representative of London's municipal interests, to fight even a losing battle. Certain it is that we have made many successes which without endeavour would never have been accomplished.

In considering the report of the Public Control Committee, formerly known as the Sanitary and Special Purposes Com-



mittee, it may be noted that the Committee has had referred to it the question of market accommodation in London together with the duties of the Council under the Public Health Act in connection with the provision of coroners' courts, and the abatement of nuisance from smoke. The licences to slaughterhouse premises were renewed in 650 cases, and to cowhouses in 597 cases; 61 licences have not been renewed. The condition of the London cowsheds is reported by the Committee to be in a satisfactory state, and special attention has been directed to the purity of the water supplied to dairy premises, for which there was perhaps a greater necessity at the time when there was no inspection as to the quality of milk. Some estimate of the extent of the duties devolving upon this Committee in the administration of the Weights and Measures Act may be formed from the fact that 586,653 weights, measures and weighing instruments were verified and stamped, while 125,472 were rejected. The amount of the fines imposed by the magistrates in respect of offences under the Act was £373, and the penalties imposed by justices £300, the total number of convictions being 619. During the year the Council's coal officers have made over 37,000 inspections with reference to the sale of coal, and 356 cases of infringement of the Act have been reported, the penalties imposed amounting to £374. The Council at present only exercises control over the conveyance and keeping of mineral liquids which, on being tested in the manner prescribed by the Act of Parliament, give off an inflammable vapour at a certain temperature. It is very desirable that powers should be obtained for authority over the storage of petroleum oil whatever its flashing point, and, further, that provision should be made for prohibiting the sale of unsafe petroleum lamps.

Mr. Spencer, the Chief Officer of the Public Control Department, in writing upon this subject in a public journal, remarks—"The law protects the miner by enforcing the exclusive use of safety lamps in mines; and the necessity for affording like protection to the helpless poor, who use dangerous non-safety petroleum lamps, is becoming every year more apparent and more pressing. Given a lamp of dangerous

construction, the mere shifting of the lamp, opening a window or door so as to produce a current of air, turning down the wick and attempting to extinguish it, are enough to initiate an accident. The record of accidents is not wanting in disastrous events."

Last year out of 2,892 fires of all kinds, no less than 290 were due to lamp accidents, and although the matter is one naturally difficult of treatment under an Act of Parliament, nevertheless some remedy should be found for this growing evil. The extent of the use of petroleum oil in London may be gathered from the fact that the shipment into London last year amounted to no less than 49,764,600 gallons.

The Committee also has referred to it the testing of gas, and 24 cases of deficient illuminating power and purity of gas have been reported during the year. The question of test and penalty is in a most unsatisfactory condition. A difference of a candle in the illuminating power of the gas supplied to London means a difference in cost of production of over £500 a day. In view of this fact the present penalties for defective power appear ridiculously small. No penalty is incurred for a deficiency less than half a candle. For anything between this and one candle a penalty of £2 is incurred, and only when it amounts to a candle does the deficiency carry with it a substantial penalty. For a full candle and every additional candle or fraction of a candle the penalty is not less than £25, and not more than £100. If a margin of half a candle is allowed before penalties follow, the minimum penalty should at least be higher.

The administration of the Infant Life Protection Act also comes under the control of this Committee, and they have registered during the past year fifteen houses for the keeping of infants, many of them unwelcome little strangers. Certain premises belonging to the Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Children have also been registered as "places of safety," pursuant to the provisions of the Act.

In the report of the Public Health and Housing Committee, formerly the Housing of the Working Classes Committee, the Council is congratulated upon the passing of the

Public Health (London) Act, 1891, without doubt a satisfactory and wide-reaching measure. Several improvement schemes under the Housing of the Working Classes Act, necessarily involving much cost, have been proceeded with, and a large number of areas await treatment. It is perfectly true that in any scheme approved under Part II. of the Act the Council may only provide a certain proportion of the cost, yet from a ratepayer's point of view, as the total cost must eventually come out of his pocket, whether the charge appears under the head of county rate or local rate is practically a distinction without a difference. I am glad to see that the Committee is following up with vigour the owners of insanitary property. I do not disguise from the Council my satisfaction at making the individual who has profited in the past, by letting the property, bear the burden of mending or ending his insanitary houses without the financial aid of the general body of ratepayers.

The question of the services of workmen's trains provided by the several railway companies running to the suburbs of London has been under further consideration during the past year, and a report on the subject was submitted to the Council, following upon the conference held early in 1891 with representatives of the railway companies. This conference had no satisfactory result. The Committee accordingly considered it desirable, having regard to the urgent necessity for encouraging the migration of the working classes into the suburbs, that the Board of Trade should be asked to use its powers to obtain an increase in the number of trains, a prolongation of the hours during which the trains run, increased uniformity of fares, and a more convenient system of tickets. With a view to obtaining precise information as to the requirements of working men in the particulars referred to, and to supply the Board of Trade with the evidence the Board desired, inspectors in the employ of the Council were instructed to report on the lines running south of the Thames. The result was so satisfactory that the Committee caused similar inquiries to be made with regard to the northern lines. Very valuable reports have been prepared

embodying all the information obtained, and copies sent to the Board of Trade and to each of the companies concerned. It is hoped this will lead to a further conference and to some practical result, although I apprehend the difficulty will be found to exist not so much in arranging the morning traffic as the return traffic in the evening.

A municipal lodging-house in Shelton-street, Drury-lane, is in process of erection by the Council, at an estimated cost of £16,300. This will accommodate about 320 persons. The building will probably be ready for occupation before the end of the present year. The costermongers of Whitecross-street have had restored to their use a building suited for their requirements, and the Committee makes the satisfactory statement that this benefit will have been obtained without any additional burden on the rates. The addition of assistant medical officers of health will no doubt enable the Committee to deal with increased expedition with the many important duties devolving upon the department to which Mr. Alderman Beachcroft, as Chairman of the Committee, pays unwearied attention.

Stores.

In the Stores Committee the system of tenders has been entirely altered. The schedules have been sub-divided, and now 81 contractors are engaged in supplying the Council with its requirements, while the prices generally are lower than formerly.

Theatres and  
Music-halls.

The Theatres and Music Halls Committee has dealt as usual with an enormous number of applications. It is hoped that the law may soon be amended in the spirit of the Council's resolutions with regard to several important particulars. In my judgment the public has been immensely benefited by the action of the Council with respect to improved means of exit and other important structural alterations at places of amusement in London. For any such vigorous action to have been conducted with the hearty approval of the lessees would have been practically impossible; but, always provided that our powers are administered in a just and equitable manner, we are far more interested in the safety of the public than in restricting the financial outlay of an individual lessee. It is no answer to say that London



theatres have been free from fire-panics resulting in loss of life. What we have to see to is that persons are afforded reasonable facility for exit in case of any emergency, and nothing can conduce more to the preservation of calm and deliberate judgment in an audience than the knowledge that the exits of the building in which they are assembled are amply sufficient for all needs.

We now come to the report of the Special Committee on the transfer of business from county justices. That Committee had to deal with matters of great moment to the Council, involving very delicate and intricate questions, and I am sure the Council is much indebted to Mr. Boulnois, the Chairman of that Committee, for his tact and ability in directing the investigation. It was, as the Committee states, quite open to have the property in question between London and the counties of Middlesex, Surrey, and Kent professionally valued, but this would have been very costly, and further have been a dilatory process, with the result that valuers on such matters would almost be sure to have widely divergent views. They therefore proceeded to take the cost price of the land and buildings of the asylums and industrial schools as a basis of value, and the furniture and other incidentals at an approximate value per bed. Objection was raised very properly to the difficulty of holding jointly an asylum with the Middlesex Council, but this difficulty was obviated by the asylum at Wandsworth, one of the old Surrey county asylums, being transferred to Middlesex. Its size was nearly suitable for the number of Middlesex patients, and its position was on the whole fairly convenient to that county. The Guildhall of Westminster, although in a central position, was a small and inconvenient building, but sufficiently large for the purposes of the Middlesex County Council. This was transferred to Middlesex. The ownership of the county bridges formed another important element in the joint settlement, but this, by the judicious negotiation of the Committee, has been adjusted. The Surrey apportionment of property and the Kent apportionment, matters too weighty for this brief summary, have also been satisfactorily arranged.

Transfer from  
County  
Justices.

And now, gentlemen, you will be glad to hear that I am able to announce the speedy close of this review. The discharge of the onerous duties devolving upon our Deputy-Chairman, although they do not properly come within the period with which we are to-day dealing, promises to be characterised by firmness and ability. One obligation resting gravely upon the Council is that of erecting convenient municipal buildings in which to discharge our growing duties. The surmounting of the initial difficulty of obtaining a really suitable site should be followed immediately by the preparation of plans for our building, and, seeing that we have already parliamentary power to acquire land for this purpose, the remainder is simply mechanical. It would be difficult to put down in money value the loss which London now sustains by reason of the inconvenient offices in which our staff perform their duties. We are not actuated by a desire for a magnificent council chamber, but by the determination that the members of the staff, at whose hands we expect good and efficient service, shall work under conditions in which their best services can be secured.

The Council will, I am sure, concur with me in expressing the view that not only do we receive the loyal support of our staff, but that there are numerous instances where signal service has been rendered to London by the activity and ability of some of its members. In conclusion, the reports of Committees bear upon every line evidence of an amount of assiduous care and patient endeavour for which a consciousness on the part of the members of the Council that they have performed their duty is a sufficient reward. The work before us is of immense magnitude, and, although the Council consists of 137 members, I venture to think that it cannot without serious inconvenience be deprived of the painstaking services of any one member.

I hope and believe that after the vacation we shall resume our labours for London with renewed energy and zeal, neither elated by success nor daunted by failure, ever remembering the magnitude of our duties, and regarding the Council's honour as our own.







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London County Council.

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ANNUAL REVIEW  
OF THE WORK  
OF THE  
LONDON COUNTY COUNCIL  
AND ITS COMMITTEES  
FOR THE  
YEAR ENDED MARCH 31st, 1900,  
BY  
THE CHAIRMAN OF THE COUNCIL,  
MR. W. H. DICKINSON.

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9TH OCTOBER, 1900.

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London County Council.

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# ADDRESS.

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GENTLEMEN OF THE LONDON COUNTY COUNCIL,

It has become a recognised custom for the Chairman of the Council to review once in every year the work of the various committees during the twelve months expiring on the 31st day of March. Hitherto this duty has been performed in the summer session, but owing to the pressure of business that always arises at that time of the year, I thought that it would cause less interruption to our work if I were to give my address at the first meeting after the summer recess when, as is well known, our ordinary agenda is usually very light. I hope that this change will commend itself to the Council, and that it may also tend to bring into greater prominence the annual review of your work, as it affords to the public the only opportunity they have of receiving an account of the principal operations in which their representatives have been engaged and of appreciating the work which is performed in the privacy of your committee rooms.

The year 1899-1900 has been unusually full of changes in the personnel of the Council. Death has emptied three of our seats. It has taken from us Mr. Matthews, who represented Dulwich for several years, one of those unostentatious men who, whilst attending almost every meeting of the Council, was probably known only to that fraction of his fellow members who had the advantage of serving on committees with him and appreciating the industry that he devoted to his public duties. Mr. Abel Penfold has also died in harness. At Woolwich, which he has served in many capacities, he was perhaps better known than in this chamber, but here also his honest and earnest work placed him in the chair of two of our committees. The third loss to which I must refer is one which, through its sadness and its suddenness, must have touched the heart of every one of us. By the death of Mr. B. F. C. Costelloe London has been deprived of a bright and promising personality; a man who gave all his remarkable

talents and all his versatile intellect to the cause of municipal work. However we may have differed from his views, not one of us can have doubted the genuineness of his intentions; not one of us but must have felt that the terrible disease which cut him off in the flower of his manhood robbed us in this chamber of one of those characters that make public life pure and honourable.

And before leaving this subject I ought not to omit reference to the decease of one who, though no longer a member of this Council, was, in heart and soul, with us up to his latest moment: I mean the late Lord Farrer. He also died in harness, although at the advanced age of 80 years. Up to the last his mind concerned itself with public questions. I have seen a letter, addressed to the "Times," on the London water question, drafted by him only a few days before his death. He served on this Council from 1889 to March, 1898, and without exception I know no one to whom London has owed more during that period of the Council's existence than it has to Lord Farrer.

We have also lost several old members through retirement. I need on this occasion only name them—the Duke of Leeds, the Earl of Dunraven, the Earl of Onslow, Mr. Alfred Hoare, Captain Middleton, Mr. Thornton and Colonel Hughes. It would be out of place for me to refer particularly to these gentlemen, but I cannot avoid mentioning one who took a very prominent and very useful part in our deliberations, namely, the Earl of Onslow. I am sure that the regret which the Council expressed when the noble lord found it necessary to hand in his resignation was thoroughly sincere, and the Council is the poorer for no longer having the benefit of his co-operation and active interest in its proceedings.

The labours of councillors continue to be constant and all-absorbing. The meetings of the Council have numbered 35, whilst those of committees have been 646, and sub-committees 790. These figures represent a large volume of work. Excluding the holidays they work out at an average of seven meetings on every one of the five working days of the week. The attendances of members have been as follows: at Council meetings, 4,085, or an average attendance of 117 at each meeting out of a total membership of 137; at committee meetings, 7,708, or an average attendance of 12; at sub-committees, 4,880, or an average attendance of 6. The total number of attendances registered were 16,573, a figure which represents a very considerable amount of voluntary effort and of devotion to public work. I mention these facts because I think that the labour of this Council, as indeed that of other local bodies in London, is too little recognised by the public,



and in this very lack of recognition there lie elements of danger to local administration from which in the end the public will be the sufferer.

In connection with this subject it may interest councillors to know that the numbers of meetings exhibit a remarkable change since the first year of the Council's existence. Although the duties of the Council have been enlarged, and we have accordingly more standing committees than we had in 1889, yet the meetings both of the Council and of the committees are actually less numerous than in that year. On the other hand, the sub-committees and the meetings of these sub-committees have very largely increased in number, showing that the Council has met its growing tasks by a process of delegating the preliminary consideration of unimportant details to smaller numbers of men. This amendment in our procedure is, in my opinion, valuable, not only as economising time and labour, but also as rendering the power of administration enjoyed by this body more elastic and more capable of coping with new duties which are every year being entrusted to it.

## THE REPORTS OF THE COMMITTEES.

### 1. THE GENERAL PURPOSES COMMITTEE.

The committees now number 30, and these committees have prepared, as usual, their annual reports, which I will now deal with seriatim. One committee appears to consider itself exempt from the obligation of reporting its proceedings, namely, the General Purposes Committee. I am unable to discover any reason or excuse for this singularity, unless it be that the General Purposes Committee is invariably presided over by the vice-chairman of the Council, and so important a functionary may very naturally consider himself to be above the law. In any case this committee would not have very much to report, as it has but seldom to present any noteworthy propositions to the Council, although in the year that has elapsed it has fathered certain schemes which have given rise to heated debates, notably those relating to the preservation of historic buildings, and the acquisition of rifle ranges for the volunteers.

### 2. THE FINANCE COMMITTEE.

In this review I must, of course, give the first place to the Finance Committee. This is the committee of which all others stand in awe. It holds not only the purse strings, but also the reins of government. Under our standing orders no committee can put forward any scheme of importance

until its financial provisions have run the gauntlet of the Finance Committee; and I know many a chairman of committee who has entered the presence of Mr. Bruce and his colleagues flushed with confidence in some elaborate enterprise, and has, after two or three hours of remorseless cross-examination, left the room a sadder and a wiser man. In the past years the Finance Committee have not had before them many proposals the strictly financial aspect of which has caused them much concern. At the same time they have not failed to note that recently the Council has found it necessary to embark on very heavy capital expenditure. Mr. Bruce, with paternal solicitude for the ratepayer, and with the caution that characterises his race, sets out a few figures in his report which it would be well if his brother chairmen would carefully digest.

He shows that whereas in the year 1898-9 the Council undertook works involving a gross capital expenditure of £7,000,000, it has in the year now under review practically involved itself in liability for a gross capital expenditure of over £11,000,000. The chief items of this large sum in round figures are—(1) new main sewers, costing about 3 millions (but of this only  $1\frac{1}{2}$  millions have been actually decided upon); (2) tunnel under the Thames, 2 millions; (3) improvements, 3 millions; (4) artisans' dwellings,  $1\frac{1}{2}$  millions; and (5) tramways and light railways,  $1\frac{1}{2}$  millions. The Finance Committee very properly make no criticism upon the merits of these particular enterprises, nor do they lose sight of the fact that a part of this expenditure will ultimately be returned to the Council through the improved value of saleable land or through the remunerative nature of the undertakings in which it is invested. But they point out that in any case the ratepayer of the next few years will be called upon to bear almost the whole of the charges incidental to this expenditure.

The committee, however, having unburdened their conscience by this note of warning, proceed to furnish certain other information which is less appalling. They show that the money actually expended in the year 1899-1900 on capital account was £1,952,876, a sum slightly below that of the previous year. This addition to our liability has brought up the net debt of the Council on March 31st, 1900, to £23,031,516 0s. 3d., which figure is about  $5\frac{1}{2}$  millions larger than the debt taken over from our predecessors in the year 1889. Of this additional debt  $2\frac{1}{2}$  millions is allocated to remunerative objects, leaving the increase in what I may call the dead burden of the Council's debt at a sum slightly under three millions.



The net result of the Council's work during the eleven years of its existence as felt by the London ratepayer has been an addition to his rates in respect of debt of a sum of only 43d., or less than  $\frac{1}{2}$ d. in the £. I doubt much whether there is any other municipal authority of importance which could testify to so moderate a demand during a period of unexampled progress in local administration. The total rate in the £ raised by the Council last year in respect of debt was 8.25d., and that raised in respect of annual maintenance was 5.25d., making a total county rate of 13½d. The county rate in the first full year of the Council's existence was 12½d. in the £, so that the increase in our rate has been exactly one penny in the £, in eleven years. Of this, roughly speaking, one halfpenny is for debt and one halfpenny for annual maintenance. With a comparatively small indebtedness and a comparatively constant rate, the credit of the Council's stock stands almost as high as that of consols. In the year 1899-1900 we issued a million and three quarters of 2½ per cent. consolidated stock at an average price of £92 4s. 10½d. per cent. Since then the Council, in common with every other borrower, has suffered by the war, and our latest issue was a 3 per cent. stock at a price of £97½. This was effected in June of the present year, and resulted in the Council's requirement of £5,000,000 being subscribed for to the extent of over £27,000,000, a fair proof of the solidity of the Council's financial reputation in the City. As the Council is aware, the Finance Committee acts on its behalf both as sanctioning authority for and as lender of the loans incurred by the London local authorities. The number of sanctions granted in the year have been 123, and the money advanced by the Council has been £1,732,291. The committee record with satisfaction that the proposal in the London Government Bill to withdraw this duty from the Council was not carried into effect. The present intimate connection between the Council and the local authorities with regard to the indebtedness of the latter is a very valuable feature in metropolitan finances, and it can only have been due to a great misapprehension as to the requirements of London government on the part of the promoters of that bill that such a proposition was advanced at all. The Finance Committee conclude their report with a statement as to the position of the Council's superannuation and provident fund, from which it appears that there has been a considerable increase in the number of contributors and the amount of contributions. They point out, however, that the actual demand upon the rates in respect of the Council's contributions is less than in the previous year. This is owing to the

fact that when a contributor leaves the service at his own desire the contributions that the Council has paid to his credit are returned to the Council. On the present occasion there has accrued to the benefit of the ratepayer of this year a sum of £1,144 provided by ratepayers of former years. It seems to me to be worthy of consideration as to how far it is equitable that the present ratepayers should benefit by the contributions of former years, and whether it would not be well to make use of this money so as to form a fund which might be available to meet cases of need or hardship which now and then are sure to arise.

The Finance Committee also gives particulars of the work completed by the Works department during the twelve months ended September, 1899, which shows that works estimated as costing £85,636 have cost £89,509, or 4·5 per cent. above the estimate; also that jobbing works of a schedule value of £36,119 have been carried out for £33,792, or 6·5 per cent. below the schedule value. The total value of the work done by the department during the last year has amounted to £364,461.

### 3. THE ESTABLISHMENT COMMITTEE.

The Establishment Committee was presided over by the late deputy-chairman, Mr. T. L. Corbett. This gentleman's term of office has been signalised by a lasting memorial in the form of an embellishment of our staircase and lobbies which has given to the building at last an air of moderate respectability. For ten years the Council has housed itself, so far as I can remember, without employing one square inch of gold leaf. The gilded chambers and the embroidered tapestry have been left to more ancient and more antiquated bodies as their mark of distinction. Spartan simplicity marked the early years of our life; and it has been reserved for Mr. Corbett to introduce us into the perilous paths of luxury. I trust his successor will not tread too rashly in his footsteps, otherwise the reputation of the County Council may be lost by acts of which we may not at first appreciate the significance. For example, if he were to lay the hand of reform upon our afternoon tea and were to bring it into accordance with modern ideas of comfort, he might afford gratification to our fair visitors, but would destroy once and for all their reverence for the county councillor who at present, in their belief, thirsts for nothing but public work.

The staff over which this committee exercises supervision is only a small fraction of the total staff employed by the Council, and yet it reaches the not inconsiderable number of

678. This in itself necessitates a constant attention to personal details that is an absolutely indispensable, but at the same time a very thankless duty. The proper housing of these officers gives rise to ceaseless questions of difficulty. I believe that every former chairman has drawn attention to the serious waste of time and efficiency caused by the inadequacy of our offices to accommodate the persons we employ. In addition to the main building in which we now sit, and the three adjoining houses which have been thrown into it, we have no less than 20 distinct houses, several of which are at a considerable distance from the main building in Spring-gardens. Not only separate departments but parts of the same department have had to be located at different spots. Half of the solicitor's department is in the main building; the other half is at 55, Charing-cross. The valuer himself has long been driven from here to a neighbouring house, greatly to the inconvenience both of himself and of the Council's committees, and now his department has outgrown even his house in Spring-gardens, and part of it has had to be moved to Warwick-street. The parks department commenced in the main building; was then removed to offices in Spring-gardens, and now again has had to be disturbed and has found no resting place nearer than Regent-street. If this process continues, the Parks Committee may some day have to consider whether it would not be well to erect tents in the public parks in which to carry on their public business. I could give many similar instances were it not that councillors themselves are as fully aware as I am of the serious inadequacy of our offices. I state without hesitation that no private company engaged in work of the magnitude of ours would hesitate for ten minutes to pull down the whole of these buildings and erect new offices. And yet this Council has accomplished nothing for ten years. Three opportunities have been missed. The earliest was when the first Council was too timid to take the City's land on the embankment. The second was in 1893, when a site in Parliament-street was obtainable on terms which, I believe, will never be bettered, and when similar arguments prevented the majority of this Council from incurring the liability. And the third occasion was in 1896, when this Council resolved to apply for powers to purchase the land lying round Spring-gardens, and when Parliament refused us the power without even investigating our proposals. For all this the Establishment Committee itself has not been to blame. It has laboriously sought for sites and elaborated schemes, and in the meantime the former have become fewer in number and the latter have grown more and more costly. Last year the Council itself awoke to

the gravity of the situation, and has appointed a new committee to report specially upon the question of a site for new county offices. I only trust that this committee will at least be as industrious in its deliberations as, and more successful in its recommendations than, the Establishment Committee.

#### ADMINISTRATIVE COMMITTEES.

I now turn to the reports of the various administrative committees, and for purposes of classification I will deal with them in four groups. Firstly, those committees engaged in actual constructive or executive work. Secondly, those whose duties partake more of the nature of watching over the safety and well-being of the public. Thirdly, those concerned in the management of asylums and other institutions; and, lastly, the committees whose chief duty is to guide the Council in the broader questions of policy which are constantly needing consideration.

### I.—COMMITTEES CONCERNED IN CONSTRUCTIVE OR EXECUTIVE WORK.

#### 4. THE MAIN DRAINAGE COMMITTEE.

First among the group of executive committees is the Main Drainage Committee, which was presided over last year by Mr. Henry Ward. The report of this Committee commences with a table of figures giving the amount of sewage treated and other kindred calculations which read more like the statistics of astronomical distances than of quantities measured and comprehended upon our little globe. The total amount of sewage treated in the year has been 79,382,570,830 gallons, and the weight of sludge sent to sea has been 2,288,000 tons. The Council will be glad to learn that although the quantity of sewage increases every year, the actual expenditure of the committee upon maintenance has been £5,000 less than in the preceding twelve months. The quality of the effluent flowing into the river is inoffensive, and the condition of the foreshore of the Thames is satisfactory. In connection with this subject I may mention that the other day a letter from a distinguished writer on subjects of natural history was forwarded to me by Sir Arthur Arnold. The letter was accompanied with the present of a very fine eel caught in the Thames, and the writer said that owing to the gradual cleansing of the river by the enforcement of old laws and the making of new ones, and largely to the example and efforts of the London County Council, the fish are increasing every year, and as this was the finest which had been caught for many years, he begged the chairman of the Council to



do him the honour of accepting it. My honoured friend and predecessor sent me the letter but appropriated the eel, so I must leave it to him to say whether or not the flavour of the fish did credit to the Main Drainage Committee.

The most important act of this committee during the past year has been to induce the Council to embark upon the great scheme of extension of the main drainage system which was some time ago elaborated by Sir Alexander Binnie, and estimated to cost £2,947,000. The necessity for this enormous undertaking has become year by year more apparent. The existing system, laid down forty years ago, was designed to serve the needs of an anticipated population of 3,450,000 persons, but the growth of London has exceeded all expectations, and we find that already the population using our system exceeds 4,700,000, and the sewers now convey in dry weather 80 per cent. more sewage than the amount which they were constructed to carry. Under these circumstances the Council has, after very great hesitation, felt that the enlargement of the drainage system must be commenced, and, on December 5th, 1899, it agreed to the recommendations of the committee. These recommendations did not cover the whole field, as it was deemed advisable that only the new outfall sewers should at first be constructed. This work involves an expenditure of £1,250,000, or about two-fifths of the complete scheme. The remainder, consisting chiefly of new intercepting sewers, will follow later on.

##### 5. THE BRIDGES COMMITTEE.

The Bridges Committee, under the chairmanship of Mr. Crooks, has had somewhat lighter work than in former years. There are only two works of first importance in course of execution at the present moment, namely, the Greenwich-tunnel and the new bridge at Vauxhall. Both of these structures are in the contractors' hands and are in a fairly forward state. The question which has most engaged the attention of the committee has been the proposal to connect Rotherhithe and Shadwell by means of a tunnel for vehicular traffic similar to that at Blackwall. The length of it will be  $1\frac{1}{4}$  miles and the estimated cost rather over two millions. It will connect two of the most populous and busy districts of London, and will doubtless prove of immense value to the industry and trade of the metropolis. When this tunnel shall have been completed the eastern portions of north and south London will at last be provided with a fairly satisfactory system of intercommunication, and the long-standing neglect under which the poorer districts of our county have suffered in this respect will have been remedied. The Bridges



Committee is to be congratulated upon the fact that Parliament has now authorised the tunnel, and that so far its work has been crowned with success. It is not unworthy of notice that this committee, notwithstanding all its labour in improving the communications over the Thames at Blackwall, Greenwich and Rotherhithe, has left but little to attract the eye. All its principal work is hidden away in the bowels of the earth, and thousands of people who gaze daily at the Tower-bridge never know of the engineering triumphs, as beneficent and probably more remarkable, which have been gained by Sir Alexander Binnie and the Council's Bridges Committee by this serviceable but unpretentious method of burrowing into the London clay. The committee, though they get but little recognition now, may console themselves with the reflection that these tunnels are estimated to endure for hundreds, I might even say thousands, of years, and that therefore in the far-off future, when some unknown race is exploring the site of a vanished London, it will pause in its excavations at Blackwall or Rotherhithe to marvel at the giant enterprise of Mr. Crooks and his committee.

#### 6. THE IMPROVEMENTS COMMITTEE.

The Improvements Committee, guided by the unceasing energy of Mr. Shaw Lefevre, presents a report which is a monument of laborious, and at the same time somewhat costly, work. They have held 38 meetings in the year, and have persuaded the Council to undertake 16 important improvements, and to contribute towards 46 others to be executed by local authorities. The net cost of the 16 works is estimated at £2,047,840. The gross cost is wisely omitted from the report, but I understand it is something approaching £3,000,000.

The scheme which appropriates the lion's share of this expenditure of money is that which has been termed the Westminster improvement. This undertaking is peculiar in several respects, not the least peculiar being the way in which it originated. It did not spring from the deliberations of any public authority. A syndicate of individuals conceived the idea that by pulling down all the poor property between the House of Lords and Lambeth-bridge, and erecting in its place lofty sets of offices and residential flats right up to the water's edge, a considerable profit would be realised. They accordingly sought powers of compulsory purchase in the session of 1898, and obtained so great promise of support in the House of Commons that there was grave danger of this scheme being carried, and the Thames-embankment and the vicinity of the Houses of Parliament being ruined for ever.

In this difficulty the Council was driven to declare that if Parliament would withhold its sanction to the bill the Council would in the near future deal with the matter itself, and on the strength of this offer the syndicate's bill was rejected. Thereupon the Council in the ensuing session found itself morally bound to promote a scheme for the purpose of rebuilding this particular area, and, as might be expected, when the scheme came to be elaborated upon the only lines upon which the Improvements Committee could see their way to execute the work so as to provide the requisite embankment and open space which alone would command public approbation, they found that, instead of there being a prospect of the handsome profit anticipated by the syndicate, there would be, after allowing for the sale or leasing of the land, a net loss on the transaction of some £530,000. This consideration, however, did not deter the Improvements Committee from recommending the execution of the project, and the Council assented to their demands. The danger of Parliament allowing a syndicate to play havoc with the embankment was felt to be so imminent that the Council was of opinion that an expenditure of half a million would be justified by the public as the price of its freedom from the clutches of private enterprise. It is not for me to say how far I think this opinion was correct. I am only recording facts. First, the fact that a syndicate forced the hand of the Council; secondly, the fact that the House of Commons, in 1898, practically compelled the Council to undertake this improvement; and, thirdly, the fact that Her Majesty's Government have made no money contribution whatever towards the cost. And I may now add a fourth fact, namely, that the bill has become an Act of Parliament, but with a new and more expensive plan forced upon us by the Committee of the Lords, which will involve an additional charge upon the ratepayer of a sum variously estimated at between £50,000 and £100,000. The total net cost will accordingly be something approaching £600,000, of which the Council bears five-sixths, and the new City of Westminster one-sixth.

Of the other improvements resolved upon by the Council, the most important is the widening of Mare-street, Hackney. Unlike the Westminster scheme, this project has passed through many vicissitudes before even reaching the stage of practical politics. As long ago as 1885 the Metropolitan Board of Works was approached by the local authority. Since that date innumerable memorials have been poured in upon the Council, and ultimately this important widening of a main thoroughfare in London has been assented to upon the understanding that the Hackney local authority

contribute one-fourth of the net cost, not exceeding £125,000, the total cost being estimated at £576,100.

The widening of Goswell-road has also been a plant of slow growth, the proposal having been under the consideration of the Improvements Committee for some ten years. This is a most congested thoroughfare, and there can be little doubt but that when the work has been completed advantage will accrue to the traffic from the north of London, especially in connection with the Council's tramways. The net cost will be £209,500, of which sum the local authorities of Clerkenwell and St. Luke will contribute between them £20,000.

Other similar widenings are those in Nine-elms-lane, which will cost £160,300, to which Battersea will contribute £15,000; Camberwell New-road, costing £52,000, of which Camberwell pays £5,000; Kentish-town-road, costing £10,450, and High-street and Gardeners-lane, Putney, costing £37,430, of which the locality provides nearly two-thirds.

The energy of the committee in the prosecution of improvements has been greatly stimulated by the aspirations of the Highways Committee. Since the Council has become possessed of the tramways it has become evident that in many parts of London the necessary development of these means of locomotion can only be effected in connection with considerable widenings of streets, and much negotiation has passed between these two committees upon this subject. An important question of principle had first to be discussed with regard to the cost of these improvements, and it was ultimately settled that each proposal should be placed in one of three classes. First, improvements necessary for the purposes of street traffic alone, apart from any tramway traffic, the cost of which should be charged wholly to the Improvements Committee; secondly, improvements necessary to meet the needs partly of the general traffic and partly of the tramway traffic, and of this the cost would be divided between the two committees; and thirdly, improvements necessary only for the tramway, the cost of which is to be borne entirely by the tramways undertaking. Under this arrangement the Improvements Committee have recommended the widening of Blackstock-road, Islington, and Harleyford-street, Lambeth, at the sole cost of the tramways undertaking, and the widening of St. John-street, Clerkenwell, and High-road, Streatham, the tramways undertaking paying one-half the cost of acquiring the property. A similar treatment was accorded to the proposals for constructing light railways, and of these the committee submitted improvement schemes for Archway-road, Islington, West-hill Wandsworth, Shooter's-hill-road Black-

heath, and Lewisham-high-road, the cost being in each of these cases divided between the Improvements Committee and the tramways undertaking. In most of these improvements there are properties along the road, of which only a portion of the garden or forecourt is required to be taken, and the Council decided to ask Parliament to make a special provision in these cases for releasing the Council from the ordinary obligation of taking the entire property when any part of it is touched. This provision is not only reasonable but absolutely essential if any extensive schemes for new tramways or light railways in London is to be carried out, except at a prohibitive cost, and I am glad to say that Parliament has acceded to the Council's contention. In the case, however, of the applications for light railways, it seems that the Railway Commissioners, to whom these proposals have to be submitted, are not empowered to give a similar exemption, and accordingly the schemes as laid before the Commissioners did not contain any reference to the widenings. The result of this was unfortunate, as the Commissioners decided that, as the proposals were not complete in themselves, it was impossible for them to approve the scheme. Amongst other special provisions proposed by the committee are included clauses for preventing the creation of new interests in property after the schemes are made public ; for enabling the Council to purchase by agreement other land not exceeding five acres required in connection with any improvement, and for securing that insanitary property appropriated for an improvement should be paid for according to the system applied to such property when taken under Acts relating to the housing of the working classes. The Council has thus in several instances succeeded in modifying the practice under the Lands Clauses Consolidation Act, and has done so by means of showing how unjust to the public the operation of this Act may be in particular instances. I believe that this injustice is not limited to the special case of this Council, and would long ago have been rectified by general legislation were it not the custom in Parliament to regard the Lands Clauses Act almost in the light of an ordinance decreed by the Divinity for the enrichment of the landowner at the expense of the community.

#### 7. THE PARKS AND OPEN SPACES COMMITTEE.

Colonel Rotton was chairman of the Parks Committee last year, and, although he is one of the councillors who for many years have given all their time to our work, even he must have found this post exceptionally onerous. The mere fact that his sub-committees met 137 times in the year does not



convey a true idea of the amount of work falling upon the chairman of this committee, for our open spaces are numerous and scattered, and the chairman must visit them periodically if he is to be in a position to guide his committee and the Council aright.

In 1889 our parks and open spaces numbered 40 ; they now number 91. In the former year the annual maintenance of them cost £52,000. It has now increased to £114,000. No one who has not served on this committee knows the immense amount of detailed work that the administration of these places entails. I will not attempt to reproduce the report of this committee, dealing, as it does, with countless points of administration. Its arrangements for 15,000 games for cricketers who have no match ground of their own ; its provision of sand pits for the thousands of infant Londoners to whose eyes the sea-shore never opens its boundless expanse ; its measures for promoting swimming and diving in its lakes ; its bands ; its by-laws ; its burial grounds ; its bird protection (I am merely quoting *seriatim* the paragraphs on one page). All this daily reports itself to the eyes of the millions to whom the work of this committee is indispensable, and from whom so long as it is conducted with the energy and enthusiasm which has hitherto distinguished it, it will meet with nothing but approval.

The additions to our London playgrounds during the past year have been less numerous than usual. First in importance is that which the Council has properly named The Archbishop's-park. Ten acres of land adjoining Lambeth Palace lying close to a population as densely congregated and as miserably housed as any section of our teeming multitude have been generously presented to the Council by His Grace the Archbishop of Canterbury to be used as a public open space. For technical reasons the fee simple of the land is not transferred, but for all practical purposes this valuable space is now secured to the public for ever.

In a distant corner of Tooting, still fairly open, but rapidly becoming as thickly built over as Lambeth, another small spot has been secured from all possibility of absorption. Eight acres known as Garratt-green, and vested in Earl Spencer, has been handed over by him to the Council for a public open space. Small pieces of land have been added to Hackney-marsh and to Clapton-pond paddock. Contributions have been made towards securing the enlargement of the Postmen's-park, and also towards the purchase of Dollis-hill estate, which, although it lies outside the county, will be greatly used and enjoyed by those who reside in the northern suburbs of London. A part of Hughes-fields, Deptford, has



at length been actually taken over as a playground for children. Years ago this spot was cleared for the erection of artisans' dwellings, but from this obligation, notwithstanding that it was useless for this purpose, it appeared well nigh impossible to get it freed. Now, happily, the Council has been allowed to use a part for the recreation of the poor children in the neighbourhood. Would that in other cases we might pull down slums and transform them into playgrounds!

There is another plot of ground which the Parks Committee has secured for the public under rather unusual circumstances. The houses surrounding a square in Limehouse, named Albert-square, recently fell into the hands of a builder, who thereby obtained the power of erecting buildings all over the hitherto unoccupied space. As the loss of this breathing space in East London would have been a public misfortune, an attempt was made to come to terms with the builder for the purchase of his rights. This having failed, the committee decided to apply to Parliament for compulsory powers of purchase, and in the session that has just closed these powers have been granted. In the early days of this Council a somewhat similar attempt was made to obtain the freehold of a piece of land of no special value to the owner, but of which the possession by the Council was essential to safeguard one of the most beautiful of the London parks. A Committee of Parliament, at that time, refused the request of the Council upon the ground that there was no precedent for the compulsory purchase of land for the purpose of an open space; some member remarking that the only precedent he knew of was the precedent of Naboth's vineyard. Now, however, a precedent has been set, and I am glad of it since I myself see no reason why, if a good case in the public interest can be made out, Parliament should not give compulsory power of purchase of land for an open space as freely as it does for a railway, a school, or a fire brigade station. Moreover, I think the case of the Albert-square should open the eyes of the public to the very serious question of what is to be the future of the numerous private squares which at present constitute part of the lungs of London; but which at any moment may become the sport of the speculative builder. I trust the Parks Committee will give this matter their consideration, and if they can devise a means of permanently preserving these bits of open land they will justly earn the gratitude of future generations.

#### 8. THE HOUSING OF THE WORKING CLASSES COMMITTEE.

I turn now to a committee to which the public attention is now directed more than to any other of our committees. I

refer to that which is concerned with what is now the most pressing of all questions in urban communities, the proper provision of dwellings for the artisan classes. Presided over by Sir John Dickson-Poynder, and during his absence in South Africa by Mr. David Waterlow, this committee has crowded into the past twelve months more work than in any former period. For several years the Housing Committee has conducted its proceedings with commendable caution. It has been experimenting both on the artisan and on the ratepayer, feeling the pulse of public opinion, doubtful as to what length it was justifiable to go in attacking this great problem. But late events have forced the Council to the conclusion that the duty of seeing after the domestic welfare of the people must be vigorously undertaken. In a city where 800,000 persons live in overcrowded abodes, where public and private clearances are annually ejecting from their homes some 20,000 of the poorest of the population, where the result of these very clearances is the congestion of neighbouring streets and the creation of new slums almost as rapidly as the old ones are destroyed, it is clear that the municipality must either leave the question quite alone or else act with vigour and resolution. Personally I am glad that this Council has decided upon the latter course and that its committee is now taking in hand building schemes upon a large scale, for I believe that we can only elevate the humbler class of people by putting a stop to the degradation of their surroundings, and that this can be best effected by the municipality owning, and managing, these houses. In proceeding with its schemes the committee has been greatly assisted by the new architect of the Council, whose labours in this matter have been unceasing and successful. He has shown that it is possible to provide healthy accommodation for workmen upon a self-supporting basis, and the committee has found itself in a position in almost every instance, notwithstanding the unreasonably stringent views of Parliament upon the subject of paying off the debt upon these dwellings, to carry out its policy without asking for any contribution from the ratepayer. If the committee are able to maintain this position they will deserve the gratitude of every man who wishes to see the Council enter upon a broad policy of housing, for unless this work can be done without cost to the ratepayer it will be hopeless to expect representative bodies to undertake schemes of sufficient magnitude to have an appreciable effect upon the present condition of affairs.

The committee's report gives detailed descriptions of the various buildings which they are in course of constructing. Rather than repeat this, I think I can give a better idea to

the Council of the volume of work done by the committee by quoting some figures given to me by the architect showing the quantity of housing work in process of elaboration in his department last spring. Taking buildings either completed within the past twelve months or nearly completed, the money value of these amounted to £370,000, or three times as much as in any previous year. Beyond this he had over £350,000 worth of buildings ordered but not then put out to contract, bringing the total value of buildings decided upon up to £720,000. And, in addition to this, he had building schemes not finally approved by the committee, but in a more or less forward state of preparation, of the value of £1,500,000. The total value of the work requiring his attention was therefore not far short of two and a quarter millions, an expenditure which would impose no slight responsibility and burden upon the office of any architect. In return for this expenditure nearly 50,000 persons will be accommodated, bringing up the number of persons provided for since the inception of the Council in 1889 to 59,751.

Proposals of this magnitude involve considerations of management as well as of construction, and the committee have been giving considerable attention to the question of re-organising the system of administration in connection with the Council's dwellings, and in this they have received no slight assistance from the special experience of their vice-chairman in relation to other artisans' dwellings. In the result the committee have elaborated a new scheme of rent collecting, management, and repairs which will bring about increased economy and efficiency. This subject is however, not yet finally dealt with, for, in addition to minor alterations in the system, the committee have come to the conclusion, in my opinion quite rightly, that, in view of the important development that is now taking place in this particular portion of the Council's work, the time has arrived when the Council should establish a separate Housing department with a chief officer of experience and responsibility to guide it in what will always be one of the most beneficent and at the same time one of the most difficult operations of all those in which it is engaged.

Exigencies of time compel me to omit much in the report of this committee, but I must not pass away from its labours without one word of congratulation upon the results of the inquiries concluded by the Railway Commissioners into the inadequacy of the accommodation provided for working men on certain of the suburban railways.

As the Council is aware, complaints were brought against the Great Eastern and the Great Northern Railway Companies by the London Reform Union, but the Council was made a party to the action, and the investigations into the subject which had already been made by the Council were submitted to the Commissioners by the statistical officer. In the result the Great Eastern Railway Company has been compelled to put on several additional workmen's trains running from the suburbs to Liverpool-street and Fenchurch-street stations. In the case of the Great Northern, however, no order was made against that company, as it did not appear that any very serious overcrowding occurred in connection with its existing trains, and the Commissioners were of opinion that the Cheap Trains Act did not throw upon the railway companies the duty of opening out neighbourhoods for the purpose of creating workmen's residential districts. They, however, suggested that two trains should be run from Enfield to King's-cross and Moorgate-street for three months from October 1, 1899, as an experiment. Since then the committee have caused the running of these trains to be watched, with the result that they appear to have been seriously overcrowded on many occasions. For instance, the examinations made on 18 days in the end of November and the beginning of December show that whereas these trains had third class accommodation for only 5,400 persons, they actually carried nearly twice that number.

## 9. THE HIGHWAYS COMMITTEE.

Next to the Housing Committee I place a committee whose work will, in the end, have no slight influence upon the problem of housing, I mean the Highways Committee, which, guided by Mr. Benn's foresight and industry, bids fair to revolutionise the whole system of London locomotion. The reputation of this committee lies rather in the future than in the past, for it is only in the last three or four years that it has commenced its career as an important part of our executive machinery. This year, for the first time, it can report the result of the Council's working of its own tramways in South London, and this report is in every way satisfactory. Its traffic receipts have exceeded by £8,000 those of the London Tramways Company in its most successful year. It has reorganised the staff and revised its rules, with the result that its relations with the men are perfectly satisfactory. It has initiated a system which gives one day's rest in seven to every person employed, and it has established a 60-hours' week. It has improved the service, extended the system of halfpenny fares, and, with all this, has been able to include in the Council's



budget for the present year the handsome sum of £42,000 to go towards the relief of the ratepayers. The Highways Committee is carrying out, on behalf of the Council, its first attempt in what some people are pleased to call municipal trading, and so far, those gentlemen who are for ever denying the competency of elective bodies to carry on work in a business-like manner must look elsewhere for the proofs than to the London County Council.

But the management of the existing horse tramways, important though it is, forms but a very small part of the problem which the Highways Committee has to solve. It has two very difficult and very urgent questions to deal with. First, the extension of tramways to meet the needs of this ever-growing city; and secondly, the adoption of electric traction, which has elsewhere been proved beyond doubt to be more rapid, more efficient and more economical than the older system. It would weary the Council were I to attempt to give in detail any account of the various lengthenings, widenings and doublings proposed by the committee and included in the bills for the parliamentary session that has just passed. It suffices to say that the total addition to tramways, including those proposed to be made under the provisions of the Light Railways Act, was no less than 25 miles. This might appear to many people to show a superabundance of energy on the part of the committee; but it must not be forgotten that during the last ten years the development of tramways in London has been at a standstill, and that with our rapidly growing population there is an immense amount of leeway to be made up. Unfortunately, the Council has succeeded in carrying through only a very small portion of this programme, namely, about five miles out of the twenty-five. In a very few instances this has been due to failure in making out a strong enough case to overcome the objections of frontagers and others before the Committees of Parliament; but the greatest cause of our failure has been due to the opposition of some of the local authorities of London. As the Council is aware, it is impossible even to lay before Parliament a bill for a new tramway without having previously obtained the consent of the local authority, *i.e.*, the vestry or district board of the locality in which the tramway is to be laid. However good or necessary the proposal may be, if the vestry says No! the Council can proceed no further. The result is that, although it is essential to connect the suburbs of London with the centre, if one intermediate locality objects to having a tram-line laid through it, the whole scheme is impracticable. One would not object if the question could be properly fought out and argued before Parliament, but this



stage can never be reached under the present standing orders of the House of Commons. This power of the local authorities has compelled the Council to drop nearly one-half of the proposed new tramways. I need hardly comment upon this fact; it reveals a serious state of affairs. If this Council, representing the whole of London, and charged as it is with the duty of developing the tramway accommodation so as to meet the needs of the whole of London, is to be prevented from carrying out its obligations solely by what I may call the selfish view of a particular locality, there must be an end to all improvement in the means of locomotion afforded to our people. Such a state of things cannot last. Either the local authorities must be induced to view this question from a broader point of view than hitherto, or Parliament will, I have no doubt, agree that the power of veto must be withdrawn from them. I trust, however, that the common sense of the new councils which are to be elected next month will prevail, so as to ensure to this Council a more reasonable consideration of the great question of metropolitan tramway accommodation than that given last year by some of the vestries and boards which are now passing out of existence.

Although the actions of the local bodies have interfered with the extension of tramways, the Highways and Parliamentary Committees have found a means of passing through Parliament a measure which will enable the Council to proceed with a most important question, namely, the conversion of the system on existing lines to that of electric traction. The Council will be able within a very short time to set about establishing electric tramcars on some 115 miles of lines, and London is therefore within sight of a practical experience of this new system which so many other towns have long ago proved to be the most effective and the most economical. The committee have been giving a great deal of attention to the question of what is the best system of electric traction to adopt, and in this have been materially assisted by Dr. Kennedy, whose special experience and wide knowledge of the subject have been placed at the disposal of the Council.

The committee has, as I have already stated, also attempted to make use of the Light Railways Act in order to obtain powers to construct electric tramways, being of opinion that it would be less difficult and less costly if this could be done in lieu of making applications to Parliament. These applications have, however, unfortunately failed, by reason of the fact that in respect to many of these lines the Council has rightly insisted that in the numerous cases where the widening of the road only necessitates taking a small portion of the garden or forecourt the public should not be mulcted by the

usual provision enabling the owner to demand that his entire property should be taken. In order to achieve this result the committee were advised that the proposals for widening the roads along which it was proposed to run the tramways should be included in an improvements bill. The effect of this division of the subject has been that the Railway Commissioners decided that, as the widenings were not before them, they could not consider the scheme as being sufficiently complete for adjudication. I fear that this decision will render it obligatory on the Council in future to proceed by bill only; but possibly the committee may yet find a way out of the difficulty.

The duties of this committee are not restricted to tramways. It has cognizance of all matters relating to electric lighting, telephone service, obstructions to street traffic, the Victoria, Albert and Chelsea embankments, main roads, subways, the accommodation for the public in railway stations, and the licensing of locomotives on roads. Out of all this varied work I only dare comment on one or two items.

In connection with its duties respecting the supply of electric light, the committee has had to take proceedings against two companies for failure of supply. In the case of the Metropolitan Electric Supply Company, repeated interruption in the illumination had caused immense inconvenience to the residents in Marylebone. The company admitted the failure, but pleaded that the causes of it were beyond their control, and the magistrate accepted the company's view and only inflicted a nominal penalty. In the second case, that against the London Electric Supply Corporation, the Council was unsuccessful before the magistrate, and the question whether the magistrate's decision shall be appealed against is still under consideration.

No less than twelve applications were made to the Board of Trade in 1899 for electric lighting provisional orders, of which five were on behalf of local authorities and seven by companies. An important question had been raised in Parliament in 1898 as to whether, in cases where an existing company had rights of supply, a local authority should be permitted to compete. The Highways Committee took the view that the Electric Lighting Act, 1888, intended that such competition should be allowed, and the Board of Trade adopted this opinion, and although the proposals of the local authorities did not pass Parliament in 1898, they have been accepted in 1899.

The question of what the Council can do in regard to the subject of the supply of electricity in bulk is still under the consideration of the committee. It will be remembered that Parliament has established certain companies with power to

supply in bulk to local authorities and others concerned in providing light or power, and has also refused to place these companies under the operation of any purchase clauses in favour of the public similar to that which the electric lighting companies are subjected to. However, both the Joint Committee of Lords and Commons, which sat in 1898, and the Committees of Parliament that have dealt with the specific bills, have intimated that this question should be properly settled by an application by some body representing the public in London for powers to supply electricity in bulk, and sooner or later action in this direction must be taken, as, if not, the public will before long find itself at the mercy of certain companies which are subject to none of the restrictions or liabilities which are at present imposed upon the ordinary electric lighting company.

Another subject of vast importance to London is the telephone service. A very considerable portion of the time of Mr. Benn and his committee has been taken up with an unceasing struggle with the National Telephone Company. I will not enter into the details of the dispute. It suffices to say that some years ago the Highways Committee were led to the conviction that the telephone service in London was far less efficient and far more expensive than such service would have been if based upon the reasonable cost of constructing the system ; and that Londoners were being made the victims of a company whose capital had been unduly inflated by various financial operations with which London had had nothing to do. They accordingly attempted to come to some agreement with the company under which the latter should have the advantage of an underground system, and in return should reduce their charges to the telephone users. This arrangement the company refused to entertain, and in view of the march of events since then, I have a shrewd suspicion that they must now regret their refusal. As no arrangement was possible the only course the committee could take was to use its influence to induce Parliament to approve of a system of direct competition, and now, by an Act of last year, the Post Office is empowered to establish a system of its own in London, and the works for this purpose are, I understand, approaching completion. When this is done the National Telephone Company will probably be compelled to reduce their charges to as low a point as they would have had to do had they accepted the original proposal of the County Council.

#### 10. THE SMALL HOLDINGS COMMITTEE.

I have three more committees to notice in my group of those that are purely administrative, namely, the Small

Holdings Committee, the Stores Committee, and the Corporate Property Committee. The first-named might indeed be termed the Small Committee, as it consists of only seven members, and it manages to conduct its work with only seven meetings in the year. But Lord Carrington always presides over it, and it is from no fault of his that the work is not greater, as annually he strives in the House of Lords to extend the power of the Council to deal with allotments as well as small holdings. As a matter of fact we have allotments on our own freehold property as well as small holdings, but for some we need to have the provisions of the Allotments Acts made applicable to London. Parliament is, however, wonderfully ill-informed as to matters affecting London, and last year again rejected Lord Carrington's bill, although I am glad to say by a smaller majority than before. After two or three more attempts I hope and believe that the legislature may sufficiently appreciate the harmlessness of the Council's proposals to give it this small additional power.

#### 11. THE STORES COMMITTEE.

The Stores Committee, under the presidency of Mr. Parker, held 19 meetings in the year, meetings of which I think the Council hardly takes sufficient cognizance. The committee deals with a subject which has but little interest to the majority of councillors, but which is of supreme importance, not only to the good administration, but also to the good reputation of the Council. For the supply of stores, schedules are issued containing no fewer than 2,192 different items, and 326 tenders were received last year. It is no light duty that of advising the Council on the question of these contracts or of seeing that these articles are proper in quality and generally satisfactory. That the work is done well is evidenced by the fact that in the quarter ending March, 1900, out of 105 samples submitted to the chemist only four were rejected.

The committee has also turned its attention to the question of accelerating the payments to contractors. In the work of a great public body like the Council there must be some delay in the settlement of accounts, but at the same time every means should be taken to avoid keeping tradespeople out of their money for an undue period. After communications with the Finance and General Purposes Committees a scheme has been devised which it is hoped will bring about an improvement in the Council's practice.

#### 12. THE CORPORATE PROPERTY, CHARITIES AND ENDOWMENTS COMMITTEE.

The Corporate Property Committee is entrusted with a double duty, firstly, that of looking after the property of the



Council, and secondly, that of looking after property on behalf of other people. In its first capacity it reports that the value of the ground rents owned by the Council was, on December 31st, 1899, a little over 2½ millions (£2,534,727). The total of the rents received in the year, including those from the tramways and workmen's dwellings, amounted to £223,989. In accordance with the general views of the Council very little land has been disposed of—not more than £8,607 worth. This committee keeps the conscience of the Council as well as its possessions, for it has to advise upon the difficult question as to whether licensed premises belonging to the Council should be preserved or abandoned. Up to the present time the Council has retained the licence attached to two premises, and in the case of 49 houses has allowed it to lapse. This reduction in the number of drink shops in London cannot fail to have a beneficial effect upon the population.

The second branch of the committee's duties is to examine and report upon all charitable or endowed schemes which affect the public. As the Council is aware, a parliamentary inquiry into the endowed charities in the metropolis has been proceeding since the year 1894, and the results have been published in 61 cases out of 82. Of recent years it has not been unusual in connection with schemes for the reconstitution of existing charities for the Charity Commissioners to give to this Council a certain proportion of representation on the new governing bodies. There are now no fewer than 41 institutions in London upon which the Council nominates governors, most of whom are members of the Council. This in itself constitutes no slight addition to the labours of our members.

The committee has on several occasions found it necessary to approach the Commissioners with a view to obtaining amendments in their schemes. Perhaps the most important question which has arisen between the Council and the Commissioners has been that of the position to be accorded to assistant masters in secondary schools. The schemes generally provide for the headmasters having absolute control over both the appointment and the dismissal of their assistants. The view of the committee is that this arbitrary power discourages many of the best men from applying for the position of assistant masters in these schools, and that it would be more just and more expedient that the final decision should be with the governors. The Charity Commissioners have not decided the point, but have thought it wiser to leave the question to be dealt with by the new Board of Education which under the Act of 1899 takes over all these duties in the course of the present year.



## II.—SUPERVISORY COMMITTEES.

I now turn to those committees whose operations affect the outside public more directly than those with which I have hitherto dealt, their duties being of a supervisory nature rather than administrative. These committees are—the Fire Brigade Committee, the Public Control Committee, the Public Health Committee, the Building Act Committee and the Theatres Committee.

### 13. THE FIRE BRIGADE COMMITTEE.

The year 1899 has been comparatively uneventful for the fire brigade; uneventful, not by reason of any special act of providence, since the actual number of fires exceeded that of any previous year, but from the fact that the patient deliberations of the Council's Fire Brigade Committee during the last ten years have placed the brigade in a position to prevent the great majority of fires from attaining serious proportions. Since the institution of the Council, its work has been unhampered by the restriction which Parliament had imposed upon its predecessors by limiting the rate they could raise to  $\frac{1}{2}$ d. in the £. The expenditure of the Council upon the protection of London from fire now costs about  $1\frac{1}{4}$ d. in the £, and I believe that no item in the rate paper is more cheerfully paid by the inhabitants of this city. Thanks to this freedom to charge what it thinks necessary, and thanks to the foresight of the committee, it may be said that London is better protected from fire than it has ever been before, and when the scheme for additional fire stations, approved by the Council in 1898, is completed, there will hardly be a householder, even in the most distant parts of our county, who will not have in his immediate neighbourhood all necessary means for rapidly obtaining the assistance of the fire brigade.

The forces at the disposal of the chief officer now include 1,139 officers and men; 63 land fire-engine stations and 104 smaller stations of various kinds; 70 steam fire-engines on land and water and 31 manual engines; 41 miles of hose; 196 fire-escapes; and 235 horses. To this one must add two very indispensable adjuncts to the brigade, viz., 624 fire-alarms and 25,306 hydrants. The increase in the number of these two appliances has been due entirely to the action of the Fire Brigade Committee, who in ten years have added no less than 266 new alarms and 16,425 hydrants, and they report that the expenditure on the latter, which has necessarily been very heavy, will probably cease in the present year, as almost the whole area of the county is now provided for.

But although a great deal has been completed, I do not think that my colleague, Mr. A. M. Torrance, can have found the post of chairman of the Fire Brigade Committee in any way a sinecure. The committee held 61 meetings, and was busily employed during the year ; firstly, in the ordinary and constant routine business entailed by the management of the brigade, and, secondly, in bringing into operation the scheme of additional protection to which the Council is committed. They have had to arrange for the erection or establishment of six additional stations and eighteen additional sub-stations, for the substitution of six new stations in lieu of old ones that have become unsuitable, and for the enlargement of ten existing stations. They have added to the accommodation at river stations. They have increased the fire alarms and telephones. They have decided upon a new type of steam engine, which the ingenuity and research that the chief officer so loyally devotes to the public service has enabled him to recommend. They have also, in conjunction with the Finance Committee, been considering the question whether an alteration cannot be made in the method by which the cost of the brigade is defrayed. All this has been going on quietly week by week in the committee room, and London pays far less attention to the work than if it had a less conscientious or a less prudent committee whose mismanagement would allow of a great periodical conflagration which alone can rouse the Londoner out of his apathy.

#### 14. THE PUBLIC CONTROL COMMITTEE.

The Public Control Committee deals with matters more directly affecting the individual inhabitants of London than does any other committee. The mere recitation of the subjects referred to in its report will show how closely it comes in touch with the personal welfare of the people. Coroners' inquests, boiler explosions, weights and measures, sale of coal and bread, gas, constant water supply, explosives, petroleum, smoke, infant life, shop hours, seats for shop assistants, locomotives, markets, diseases of animals, rabies, &c. ; all these are receiving the constant attention of this committee. The amount of work required to be done on behalf of the public is enormous. During the last year no fewer than 2,324,841 appliances for weighing and measuring were examined for verification, of which 383,295 were rejected. Eleven hundred offences against the Weights and Measures Acts were dealt with. Seven hundred and fifty-seven offences in connection with the sale of coal were discovered and 228 in relation to the sale of bread ; 211,392 gas meters have

been tested, of which nearly 100,000 were the slot meters used by the poorer classes; evidence of smoke nuisance was furnished in 719 cases. Reports have been made upon 3,044 premises registered for keeping explosives, and there have been 6,708 inspections of premises containing petroleum. The inspectors under the Shop Hours Acts have visited 113,271 shops and discovered 14,424 premises where the Act was infringed.

These figures may be dry but they are instructive, as showing not only the immense volume of administrative work over which this committee has supervision but the great responsibility that rests upon the members to whom we have entrusted duties affecting such important interests and such numbers of the population. The Council has practically handed over to them the execution of its powers, relying entirely on its discretion and sense of justice, and I believe it can rest assured that its confidence has not been misplaced.

There are many points in the committee's report which deserve consideration, but I only dare mention one or two. In the administration of the law regulating weights and measures it is satisfactory to learn that since the institution of the Council a remarkable improvement in the retail trade of London is noticeable. Both in the case of shops and of hawkers' barrows the proportion of unjust to just measures is one half of what it was a few years ago. In the case of the sale of coal the number of convictions has been reduced from 444 in 1890 to 40 in 1899.

The use of dangerous petroleum still continues to cause numerous accidents. Last year there were no fewer than 23 deaths in London attributable to this cause. The committee is powerless to prevent this so long as Parliament refuses to raise the legal flash point. In the case of petroleum spirit, over which the Council has authority, the precautions insisted upon by the committee have entirely prevented any serious accident; but over the use of petroleum oil, of which 93,000,000 gallons are brought into London annually, the Council can place no restriction whatever, and this dangerous state of things continues year after year notwithstanding urgent representations of this Council, reports by Select Committees, and repeated promises by H.M. Government to introduce legislation on the subject.

The subject of the method of testing gas has taken up much of the committee's attention in the past year. The experience of the Council's officers, which has now been very extensive, show that in 90 per cent. of the tests made by the portable photometer the illuminating power of the gas, as supplied to the consumer in London, is below the legal

standard, and this notwithstanding the fact that the gas, as tested at the fixed stations, complies with the requirements of the law. This discrepancy appeared to call for correction, and accordingly the committee advised the Council to seek powers to enable it to test the gas at other places than the gas-testing stations by means of the portable photometer. The bill introduced by the Council for this purpose has, however, been rejected by a Committee of the House of Commons on the ground, I presume, that the tests might be taken in unsuitable premises, and therefore be unreliable. I hope that the committee may devise some scheme which will meet this objection, and enable it to be more successful in its next application to Parliament. In the meantime it has resolved to ask the Board of Trade to institute an inquiry in order to ascertain what is the true cause of the serious difference in the quality of the gas when tested at fixed stations and when tested by a portable photometer.

The committee has lately been giving a good deal of consideration to the all-important question of smoke abatement, with respect to which, as I have said, it has furnished evidence of nuisance in over 700 cases. Seeing that the responsibility for prevention of the smoke nuisance has been entrusted specially to the local authorities of London, it might have been thought that this addition to its burdens would not have fallen upon the Council, but under the Act of 1891 the Council has a right to act in default when a local authority neglects its duty, and although I am glad to say it has not been found necessary to take this action in the past year, the committee have in several instances had to warn the local authorities of its intention to interfere before they would agree to take steps to abate the nuisance. It is, in my opinion, a matter of regret that the Council should find itself placed in this position in relation to the other public authorities. London demands a stringent enforcement of the law for the prevention of smoke. Some local authorities carry out the law—others do not; and yet the pressure of outside opinion falls invariably on this Council, and forces it into a position of antagonism to the bodies that are really responsible. There are functions of local government which are quite properly relegated to the local authorities. There are others which would be better administered by the central body. I believe this duty of clearing the atmosphere of London from fumes which ought not to vitiate it belongs to the latter class, and it would have been of advantage to London if Parliament, in amending London government last year, had taken the opportunity of transferring this duty to the Council.

Towards the close of 1898 the Council resolved to add considerably to its staff of inspectors under the Shop Hours



Act, and this is the first completed year since that resolution. The number of premises where infringements of the Act were discovered amounted to 14,424, but it is right that I should add that in 12,579 of these cases the infringement consisted only in failure to post up the necessary notice. The cases in which young persons were kept for excessively long hours numbered 1,845. An important judicial decision has been given in the case of the Savoy Hotel, Limited, the owner of which contended that five boys employed for more than 74 hours in the week were not protected by the statute. The divisional court, I am glad to say, ruled that they were, and the result of this decision, as it affects other hotels, is of great value.

The Act of 1899, which renders obligatory the provision of seats for female assistants in shops, came into operation on January 1, 1900, and in the first three months of this year the Council's inspectors reported upon 4,167 premises affected by the Act. In many cases seats were found to have been provided, and in the others the committee anticipate no difficulty in inducing the shopkeepers to make the necessary provision.

The committee refer to their attempts to obtain control over the Spitalfields-market; but of this I will speak when I deal with the Parliamentary Committee.

#### 15. JOINT COMMITTEE ON CORONERS' COURTS AND MORTUARIES.

In concluding my reference to the Public Control Committee, I must say one word with reference to the actions of the Joint Committee on Coroners' Courts and Mortuaries. This committee, presided over by Sir George Harris, has pursued the even tenour of its way, and has been gradually extending these necessary adjuncts of urban civilisation until at last London may be said to be fairly well provided with them. One of the first results of their labours has been shown this year, when, for the first time, no inquest at all has been held in a public-house. I am glad to think that this practice, which has been too long tolerated in our midst, is now a matter of nothing but historical interest.

#### 16. THE PUBLIC HEALTH COMMITTEE.

Ninety-nine Londoners out of every hundred would, I think, express astonishment if told that the County Council is not a sanitary authority. Day by day letters stream into our Public Health department complaining of default in administration, of drains, of dirt, of disease, of the thousand



and one drawback to comfort and health that occur in a crowded city, and in almost all of these cases all that the Council can do is to pass on this complaint to the local authority and bring pressure to bear if it is not attended to. Parliament has thought fit to divide the responsibility for the health of the metropolis amongst 43 separate authorities, and although I believe that a different course might have been adopted with great advantage fifty years ago, at present London is so far committed to a system of varying administration that it would be unwise to recede from it. At the same time it is noticeable that this Council is the only body that concerns itself with the health of London as a whole, and its duties in this respect are sufficient to afford work for a separate Public Health Committee, which was presided over last year by Mr. A. L. Leon. The Council has a good deal to do with framing by-laws for the purpose of sanitation, and the committee have recently, after lengthy correspondence with the local authorities and the Local Government Board, laid down new regulations as to the construction, cleansing and repair of drains, the removal of offensive matter through the streets and the disposal of peat moss in stables. The committee have also awarded a prize for the best design of a dust-cart, which was exhibited at the Parkes Museum and has been the subject of considerable interest.

There is also a duty cast upon the Council of seeing that the law is properly administered by the local authorities, and in this connection the committee's attention has been given to the cases of several parishes of which the governing bodies, even if they have not done those things which they ought not to have done, have been prone to leave undone those things which they ought to have done. For example, the law requires that every sanitary authority shall make and enforce by-laws for—*inter alia*—fixing the number of persons who may occupy a house that is occupied by members of more than one family. The active execution of this duty is, in my opinion, the only means whereby an effective check can be placed upon the terrible evil of overcrowding. The Council may build; the borough councils may build; philanthropic companies may build; but it will all be of no avail so long as the local authorities allow private householders to fill their rooms and their pockets without regard to the consequences. And yet a recent enquiry has revealed the fact that in a number of districts the Public Health Act is a dead letter. In one case a vestry made by-laws one of which purported to give them discretion in registering lodging-houses. When the by-laws were confirmed they exercised their discretion by taking no action under the by-law, and

the Council has been advised by the Local Government Board that in this case, as the by-law has been allowed, nothing further can be done.

A similar question has arisen with respect to the number of sanitary inspectors employed by the various local authorities. From a table furnished by the committee, I see that the proportion of the number of inspectors to the population varies enormously in different districts. The minimum is 5,945 persons for one inspector, whilst the maximum is 37,020 persons for one inspector, and between these extremes there is every grade of variation. It is clear that either some parishes are overstaffed or that in others the staff is below its proper strength. I fear the latter is the true case, and the committee have instructed the medical officer of the Council to report to them upon the condition of affairs in Kensington and St. Pancras, two of the most important parishes in London. These reports have been circulated to the Council, and in the case of St. Pancras the committee is waiting for the Local Government Board enquiry, which will take place shortly, whilst the question as regards Kensington has been allowed to stand over until the new borough council has been elected.

Two important cases have been decided with reference to the registration of common lodging-houses. For a long period the committee have been concerned at the danger to public health arising from the existence of a large number of premises used by the poorest classes as lodging-houses which have not been registered or inspected owing to the fact that they are owned by philanthropic agencies, and the High Court of Justice in *Booth v. Ferrett* had decided some years ago that a common lodging-house not run for private profit did not come under the Act. The committee were advised that this decision was bad in law, and in the interests of the public it was important that a further decision by a superior court should be obtained. The principal institutions concerned were the Salvation Army shelters, the Victoria Home in Whitechapel, and the Rowton Houses. In the first place letters were addressed to the managers of these dwellings inviting them to apply for registration, but this not being assented to proceedings were taken before a magistrate. All three cases were dismissed, the magistrate holding with respect to the first two that they were not kept for gain and therefore came into the benefit of the earlier decision, while with respect to the Rowton Houses he was of opinion that as a fact these are not common lodging-houses. The Council

thereupon appealed upon the first two cases, with the result that the Courts have now held that the case of *Booth v. Ferrett* was wrongly decided, and that whatever may have been the object or motive of the owners of the premises in question they are common lodging-houses within the Common Lodging Houses Acts, 1851 and 1853.

The action of the committee in taking these proceedings was warmly criticised at the time, but looking at the result and the importance of there being some general practice applicable to all common lodging-houses I cannot but say that I think the committee were justified in what they did, and indeed that they could not consistently with their obligations to the public have allowed the matter to remain unsettled any longer. Now that the question is decided there should be no difficulty in bringing the shelters of the Salvation Army into proper condition, and I am sure the committee have no desire to hamper the magnificent work which the Army is doing amongst the poor.

There is one other subject upon which I must say a word, and it is that of the sale of unwholesome milk. By an order of the Local Government Board it has been made an offence to sell milk taken from a cow which has been certified by a veterinary surgeon to be suffering from tubercular disease of the udder. Immediately upon the issuing of this order the committee took steps to have all the cows in London examined, with the result that a certain number were found to be diseased, and the sale of their milk was forthwith prohibited. So far as milk produced in London is concerned the public interests have been protected thus far, but the great bulk of milk consumed in London comes from the country, and over this milk the Council has no control. The committee, however, have as an experiment arranged that samples of milk brought to London should be bacteriologically examined by Dr. Klein, and he has reported that out of 97 samples submitted to him seven contained tuberculous matter. If this proportion holds good with all the milk imported into London, the position is one deserving serious attention. The only way to protect Londoners against this danger is for all the local authorities in the country round London to initiate a systematic examination of cows similar to that which has been established in London; but it is evident that at present there is but little hope of this course being generally adopted, and the only steps which the committee have been able to take is to report these facts to the Local Government Board and the Board of Agriculture, in the hope that such examination may be made compulsory throughout the country.

## 17. THE BUILDING ACT COMMITTEE.

The Building Act Committee is another of our committees whose work is felt more by the outside public than in the Council. I sometimes regret that the long list of recommendations presented weekly by this committee passes through with so little comment. The Council's silence shows great confidence, but at the same time rather too little interest in its committee; and yet there is no committee that holds in its hands the reputation of the Council for just or unjust dealing, for a broad-minded or a narrow policy, to the extent that this committee does. Over 26,000 building operations are carried out in London during the year, and although the great majority of them are dealt with by the district surveyors, every week a long list of cases requiring special attention is brought before the Building Act Committee. Some of them give rise to difficult questions of law, and in many of them the decision of the committee may involve the applicant in a very large pecuniary loss or gain. The Council cannot be too grateful to this committee, and particularly to its chairman (in the past year Mr. David Waterlow), for the assiduous attention given to a mass of detailed, and in some respects uninteresting work. And I would suggest that this gratitude might be shown by councillors volunteering more readily for service on this committee than they have done hitherto.

I need not trouble the Council with the numerous cases which the committee has had to contest in the law courts. Perhaps the most far-reaching decision has been that of the Court of Appeal affecting certain one-storey shops in Pentonville-road, standing on what were originally forecourts and proposed by the owners to be raised to the full height allowed by the Building Act in the case of ordinary buildings. Fortunately this attempt to interfere with a class of street well known in London and very valuable for proper circulation of air, has been frustrated by the efforts of Mr. Waterlow and his colleagues.

The ordinary work of the committee with reference to the approval of streets and buildings has been very heavy, the total number of applications for consent having exceeded the average of previous years. The total length of new streets sanctioned has amounted to 23 miles. The number of dangerous structures dealt with have been 2,966.

The Factory and Workshop Acts still provide the committee with a very large amount of work. There have been some 2,000 premises notified by the Home Office as requiring the provision of additional means of escape in case of fire, and of these about one-half still remain to be dealt with.



The question of what requirements shall be made so as to cause as little interference with trade as possible is extremely difficult, but so far the committee have carried out their duties satisfactorily to the majority of factory owners, and it is pleasing to note that in a letter lately received from the Home Office, the Home Secretary expressed his appreciation of the work done by the Council in the administration of these Acts.

#### 18. THE APPEAL COMMITTEE.

Somewhat akin to the Building Act Committee is the Statutory Appeal Committee, which decides upon appeals brought by builders and others against orders of the sanitary authorities in relation to the subsoil of streets, the construction of drains and similar matters. During the past year only five cases have come before this committee, in two of which the appellant has succeeded.

#### 19. THE THEATRES AND MUSIC HALLS COMMITTEE.

The report of the Theatres and Music Halls Committee is concise, so concise that an ordinary reader would wonder what has been the work which has occupied Mr. Yates and Sir Algernon West during 34 meetings. Yet every one who looks into the committee room on a Wednesday afternoon must realise that the duties of the committee are by no means concluded by the annual licensing sessions. There are in London 336 places licensed for public entertainment, giving accommodation for 400,000 persons, and every one of them at one time or another has undergone the scrutiny of the committee. Under the direction of the committee all these places are periodically inspected by officers of the fire brigade and of other departments. Regulations have been made with respect to the use of cinematographs and of explosives in connection with entertainments so as to ensure as far as possible public security. At the same time it must be borne in mind that the Council's powers only extend to premises requiring to be licensed, and bazaars and similar functions are constantly taking place in London of which the Council has no cognisance under circumstances not less dangerous to those who attend them than those of the well-known disaster in Paris. The committee have had to act on behalf of the Council in connection with several applications for permission to hold Sunday concerts in licensed places. The past action of the Council with respect to this very difficult question has not been of a nature to afford any sure guidance to its committee. At the same time, it is probable that the present position of compromise under which the Council, whilst not



recognising Sunday concerts as legal, at the same time does not prevent them being given where the object of the promoters is the elevation of the people and not merely personal gain, is perhaps more beneficial to the public at large than would be any attempt to lay down a rule upon a subject which, like most questions of religion, is open to opinions as divergent as they are on both sides conscientious.

It is satisfactory to learn that the number of applicants for licences exceeded those of last year by 32. The ever-growing population of London, and its ever-growing stream of industrial life, requires increased means of relaxation, and so long as the tendency of these entertainments is not demoralising, we must welcome all additions to the number of them.

I find that during the existence of this Council the number of seats in places licensed for public entertainment has been increased by over 100,000, a figure which hardly bears out the accusation so often made against this Council that its policy has been to discourage the amusement of the people.

### III.—ASYLUMS, INSTITUTIONS AND TECHNICAL SCHOOLS.

#### 20. THE ASYLUMS COMMITTEE.

The report of the Asylums Committee with its mass of valuable information occupies 185 pages, and, in its bulk, represents very fairly the volume of work performed by this committee and its 17 sub-committees. The total number of meetings in the year has been 229. The attendances of its 40 members average 51 a piece. Those of the chairman, Mr. Hubbard, alone amounted to 212. When we bear in mind that most of these attendances involve a journey into the country occupying two or three hours, we must recognise that service on the Asylums Committee imposes no slight tax upon time and attention. I mention this because I have long thought that councillors generally should do something to lighten the burden upon those upon whom hitherto the asylums work has almost entirely fallen. I believe it would not be unjust or inexpedient if a rule were laid down that every member of the Council should serve for at least one year on this committee. I fear that in practice such a regulation is impossible, but in all seriousness, I would urge the necessity of a larger number of members volunteering for this committee. The work is in some respects of a painful nature, but to many men it presents features of great interest. Nowhere in the world is the care of lunatics conducted on so large a scale as in London. The figures with which the committee's report teems are of appalling magnitude. 21,393 is the number of

lunatics and imbeciles for which the various public authorities in London were responsible on 1st January, 1900 ; 15,185 of these are provided for by this Council, and 13,947 of them are housed in our own asylums.

Seven asylums are at present occupied, the eighth is in process of building, and a ninth is in contemplation. The number of lunatics is still increasing. We have now 5,000 more than we had in 1889. In the past year the actual increase was somewhat less than usual, but the committee say that this is due to reasons of administration rather than to any diminution in lunacy. How can we stop this ever-growing army of incapables? The committee, by the institution of the pathological laboratory and its able staff of investigators, are doing much to assist science in elucidating what are the real causes of the disease. Dr. Mott's interesting report to the committee consists largely of words of which I confess I know not the meaning, but I note two, repeated over and over again, the significance of which appeals to us all, "syphilis" and "alcohol," and I look to a table in the report, prepared by the committee, giving the number of lunatics chargeable to the different districts in London per 1,000 of population. The ratio varies from two per 1,000 in one parish to 10·3 per 1,000 in another. Thirty-two districts are named, in 16 of which the ratio of lunacy is below the average, and in 16, above. With one exception, that of St. George's, Hanover-square (which contains a large area of open space), the districts which show the least lunacy are the outlying districts of London, such as Hampstead, Fulham and Poplar. With one exception, that of St. Pancras (for which there are special reasons), those parishes where the lunacy rate exceeds the average, are the congested districts of the centre and the east. May we not deduce from this an inference for which no special laboratory research is necessary, namely, that the causes of lunacy are to be looked for in the homes of the people? When human beings cannot live as human beings, human brains cease to be human brains. The degeneration of the body and the demoralization of the mind, which are rampant amongst the overcrowded sections of our population, soon tells upon the intellect. On the other hand, amongst those who can live in a normal condition in healthy suburban homes, lunacy seems to be almost non-existent. If this is so, we on this Council have the remedy in our own hands; aye! in the very work which at present occupies us. When slums no longer exist in this metropolis; when gardens or open spaces grace every district; when public-houses have given place to public parks; when we have fully recognised that it is wiser to build

cottages for the sane than castles for the insane ; then, and not till then, may we hope to see some abatement in the ravages of this terrible disease ; then, and not till then, shall we be able to relieve the ratepayer of the burden which the maintenance of 15,000 lunatics entails.

I am glad, however, to see that the committee has succeeded by means of a more economical administration in effecting a real saving to the rates. The completion of the Council's new asylums has rendered it possible to reduce the number of patients boarded out at other asylums from 2,492 to 1,295, and owing to this the annual cost of the 15,061 lunatics in 1899 has been £27,000 less than that incurred in 1898, although the number of patients in the former year was only 14,645. If this additional accommodation had not been available the cost in 1899 would have been £53,000 more than it actually has been. It is fortunate that the committee has been able to effect so great a reduction in cost, as it would seem that owing to the general increase in the prices of coal and of many other commodities, maintenance at the present moment is much more expensive than it has been for several years.

## 21. THE INEBRIATES ACTS COMMITTEE.

This year we have the first report of a new committee appointed by the Council to administer the provisions of the Inebriates Act, 1898. It has had the advantage of being presided over by Dr. Collins, whose technical knowledge of the subject has largely guided the committee in putting this Act into operation. The Act, which aims at the provision of homes for the cure of drunkards, is optional on the part of local authorities, and the question whether the Council should assume this new function or should leave the matter in the hands of the State and of private homes, occupied the most careful consideration of the Council for several months. Ultimately the Council came to the resolution in February, 1899, that it would adopt the Act, and itself provide the necessary homes for inebriates ; a decision which I fully believe from our experience in connection with asylums and industrial schools will be the most beneficial way of providing for the care and reformation of the poor people in whose interest the Act was passed. Pending the completion of its own reformatory, the Council provided for the accommodation of London patients by arranging contracts with reformatories which were already established. That this early action of the Council was necessary appeared from the fact that some of the metropolitan police magistrates, who had not made themselves

acquainted with what the Council was doing, commented upon the Council not having, as they thought, afforded them the necessary means of dealing with the cases coming under their notice. It was of course inevitable that some time should be occupied by the committee in careful deliberation, but under all the circumstances I think Dr. Collins is to be congratulated upon having in twelve months placed the Council in a position to fulfil its responsibilities. The committee has purchased an estate near Horley, and has fitted the buildings up for the accommodation of 30 female patients, and has appointed a superintendent and staff. It has also prepared plans for a new home for men in case this is required. At present, however, there appears to be very little demand for homes for male inebriates, and the committee are therefore wisely holding their hand until the true requirements are ascertained.

## 22. THE INDUSTRIAL AND REFORMATORY SCHOOLS COMMITTEE.

The Industrial and Reformatory Schools Committee, of which Mr. R. A. Robinson has been the chairman, is another of those committees that carry on their good work almost entirely unknown to the Council. As I would make it obligatory on every councillor to serve on the Asylums Committee, so would I like to compel him to pay a visit to one of the Council's industrial schools at least once during his three years of office. This committee is answerable for the maintenance and education of over 1,200 children (of whom 700 are in its own schools) whose prospects in life when they first come under the cognizance of the committee are perhaps the most hopeless that face any London boy or girl, and yet, I am thankful to say, the great majority of them ultimately develop into honest and prosperous citizens. During the last ten years the committee have been elaborating the details of a scheme of reform in the management of the Feltham and Mayford Schools which was originated chiefly by Mr. Edric Bayley in 1898. It aimed at giving the boys a more thorough training in work which would be of use to them in their future life, and it is gratifying to find that, even by this time, the Government inspector is able to report, with regard to Feltham School, that "the managers are to be congratulated on the great advance made by this school in the last two years. In both industrial and physical training the school takes a high position, and it is most gratifying to find that great pains are taken to look after boys when they have left, so as to secure, as far as possible, a permanence in the good



work done for them while in the school itself." And with regard to the industrial training in Mayford School, he says: "This department shows decided improvement, especially in the shoemakers' shop, which has developed into a valuable technical class, and as such is not surpassed by any school under inspection. The joiners' shop promises to be a very useful training shop also."

No one can go to these schools without being convinced that most of the boys there will, when their term of detention expires, be able to go out into the world with ample means of earning a good wage, and thus from the first appreciate the advantages of living an honest and industrious life. This is due, not only to the prudent administration of the committee, but also to the enthusiastic manner in which the superintendents and officers of the schools devote themselves to the welfare and improvement of the boys.

I note that the number of boys at Feltham has fallen off in the last year, there being, on March 30, 1900, 99 boys less than in 1899. Although it may appear rather odd to say so, I think this is a matter for regret. If it were due to an actual diminution in the number of cases suitable for detention in a reformatory I could only welcome such a sign of improvement in the population, but I understand that it is owing really to a tendency on the part of magistrates not to send offenders to Feltham School. I feel sure that, if this is so, it arises from a lack of knowledge of the real advantages of this school; and in the interest of these poor boys themselves I would be glad if the magistrates could visit our schools and see for themselves what is being done there.

### 23. THE TECHNICAL EDUCATION BOARD.

But if the Council is dispensing industrial teaching in its own schools it is doing a far greater work of a similar kind for Londoners generally through the agency of its Technical Education Board. It is impossible for me in the time at my disposal to do justice to the operations of the committee over which Mr. Organ presides. The committee or its sub-committees have met 153 times in the course of the year, and have concerned themselves with almost every branch of education, from the establishment of a university for London to that of a school of nautical cookery. Its report ranges over a vast field of subjects affecting perhaps more intimately the future condition of Londoners than any other matter with which the Council deals. It records an uninterrupted development in the success of the various polytechnics and other schools of handicraft or art which it subsidises or administers.



It states that the accommodation of these institutions is taxed to the uttermost to meet the requirements of the numerous evening students who are attracted to the classes. It points to new developments in the education provided at these institutions, to a school of physics here, a department for domestic economy there, classes in municipal engineering, cycle construction, watch-making, laundrywork, a school for bread-making and confectionery which "promises to become a national school of bakery." It recites the successes in the schools of art which the Council assists, and quotes Mr. Walter Crane's report upon the work submitted to him to the effect that there was a large increase in the number of works sent in, and that they were generally of an improved quality as compared with those submitted when he made the awards in 1898. It states the number of scholarships awarded by the Board in the year to be 1,894, of which over 800 are given to girls to enable them to study domestic economy and cookery. Twenty commercial scholarships for boys have been instituted. The Board has recently given a good deal of attention towards providing a real system of commercial education. London, the centre of the world's commerce, is behind every other great town in the study of commercial science, and the Board has allocated a certain amount of money to enable teachers to study the methods adopted in commercial institutions on the continent, and one of these gentlemen has been appointed by University College to take charge of a new commercial department in University College School.

The functions of the Board do not end with purely technical education. The line of demarcation between this and secondary education is so fine as to be hardly apparent, and from the first the Board has found itself compelled to allocate some of its funds to the promotion of technical education in secondary schools. It has done all it can to institute a system of day classes for boys and girls at the polytechnics whereby the laboratories and other rooms are utilised instead of lying vacant until the evening. Moreover, in many pre-existing secondary schools the Board, by means of grants for laboratories or scientific appliances, has succeeded in developing the teaching of experimental science and other similar subjects necessary for a thorough technical education.

Two important events affecting the work of the Technical Education Board have taken place during the last year. The first is the passing of the Board of Education Act, 1899. This Act constitutes a new central board of education, which takes over the supervision of the three branches of education, primary, secondary and technical. Under the two last heads there is no doubt that the new administration will come into

very close touch with the Council's educational system, and already, as the successor of the Science and Art Department, it is concerned in the proper conduct of the Council's duties with regard to the 53 institutions which have entered the organisation established last year for the co-ordination of technical education in London.

The second event of 1899 has been the final settlement of the great problem of how to establish a complete university for London. The report which I am now reviewing gives an interesting account of the controversy which has lasted for nearly twenty years, and which has been the subject of investigation by two Royal Commissions, the first of which proved absolutely abortive, whilst the second hung fire for several years before any movement to carry it into effect seemed likely to succeed. I need not trouble the Council with this subject beyond saying that whilst recognising that the settlement of this dispute has been at last brought about by the efforts of many persons and institutions of high standing and great influence, I have a shrewd suspicion that the motive power which at a moment of deep inaction pushed the movement into life again, found its origin within these walls. Whether this be so or not, there is no doubt that the earnest and spirited aspiration of the Council's Technical Education Board to place the crown of a teaching university upon its system of technical and secondary instruction has resulted in the establishment of such a university, towards which the Council will contribute money, and in which there will be recognised faculties in subjects such as engineering, economics and commerce, and of which teachers and students in certain of the polytechnics and technical schools will form constituent parts. By the creation of this new University of London, and by the inclusion in it of the educational work that this Council supervises, there is at last established in this county a system of instruction through which any boy or girl may climb from the lowliest beginning to the highest educational honours that talent and industry can gain.

#### IV.—WATER COMMITTEE, RIVERS COMMITTEE, LOCAL GOVERNMENT COMMITTEE, AND THE PARLIAMENTARY COMMITTEE.

There remain four committees whose reports I have not yet dealt with. I have kept them until the last, not because their duties can be said to be any more important than those of other committees, but because they have reference to broad questions of policy which carry them outside the

Council's immediate operations, and tend towards results of a far-reaching character to the future of our great city. These committees are the Water Committee, the Rivers Committee, the Local Government Committee, and the Parliamentary Committee.

#### 24. THE WATER COMMITTEE.

The report of the Water Committee is very short, due, I have no doubt, to the fact that it has held only eleven meetings and has probably transacted very little business. However, it refers the Council to certain very voluminous reports which it has presented during the year as evidence, I suppose, that it has not been wholly idle.

The report refers, in the first place, to the Act passed in 1899, upon the initiation of H.M. Government, for the purpose of enabling a scheme of intercommunication between the mains of the eight water companies to be carried out, so as to safeguard the east of London from a repetition of the disastrous famines which had arisen in previous years owing to the want of co-operation between the companies. The principle of rendering the water of all the companies available for any part of London has for years been pressed forward by the Council, and had the Government measure been restricted to putting this principle into operation, the Water Committee would have seen no objection to it. The bill, however, contained two new propositions inimical to the public interest. It proposed that the power of authorising the necessary capital expenditure should be vested in the Local Government Board instead of in Parliament as hitherto has been the case, and it exempted this capital from the operation of the usual sinking fund clauses. The Water Committee advised the Council to contest these two proposals, and, before a committee of the House of Lords, the evidence given on the Council's behalf was successful so far as the sinking fund clause was concerned. The Government, however, intervened when the bill was reported, and persuaded the House of Lords to disagree with its own committee, and the provision which would have compelled the companies to pay over a certain percentage to the Chamberlain's fund was struck out.

The committee's attention has of course been chiefly directed to the subject of the Report of the Royal Commission upon London Water Supply and the Council's bills for purchasing the companies, and introducing a supplemental supply of water from Wales. I need only rehearse the facts in relation to this with great brevity.

The Royal Commission presided over by Lord Llandaff was appointed in May, 1897. It heard evidence until March, 1899, and it issued its report in January, 1900. In the year 1897 the Council had bills before Parliament, which the House of Commons refused to send to a committee on the ground that a Royal Commission was to be appointed to enquire into the financial expediency of purchase. Whilst the Commission was sitting, the Council could make no progress, but in the autumn of 1899, six months after the Commission had concluded taking evidence, the Water Committee, being convinced of the extreme urgency of arriving at some settlement, and believing that the report of the Royal Commission would be issued in time for the Government and Parliament to come to some conclusion in the matter, advised the Council to reintroduce its purchase bill and its new supply bill, so that at any rate some progress would be possible in the session of 1900.

The report of the Royal Commission when issued bore out the contention of the Council that purchase of the companies on fair terms would be financially expedient, but it recommended that a new authority should be constituted, including representatives of outside bodies and of this Council, which authority should be required forthwith to buy the whole of the undertakings and administer the water supply on behalf of the entire area at present served by the companies. The Water Committee, in a fully reasoned report, dated the 23rd of February, 1900, expressed to the Council its view upon the Commission's decision, and after pointing out that the main portion of the recommendations, namely, those respecting purchase, might be, as a compromise, incorporated into the Council's bills then before Parliament, advised that a deputation should attend the President of the Local Government Board in order to ascertain whether he would be willing, on behalf of Her Majesty's Government, to permit the Council's purchase bill to go before a select committee upon the understanding that it would be modified as far as possible so as to coincide with the Commission's report as regards purchase, and that the Council, if authorised to purchase, should hold the undertakings in trust for whatever new body should be established for the purpose of ultimate administration. Mr. Chaplin replied that he had just received a deputation from the members of Parliament representing London urging him to oppose the Council's bill in its entirety, and he accordingly did not hold out much hope that he would assist the Council. When the second reading was brought on Mr. Chaplin, on behalf of the Government, spoke against the bill, and the Council's proposals were thereupon rejected,



without any investigation as to how far it would be possible to modify them. This is the third occasion on which the House of Commons has refused to this Council the privilege conceded to almost every other corporation of laying its proposals fairly before a committee of Parliament. In the Parliament of 1892-5 the Council's water bills passed the second reading, and the committee to whom they were referred practically accepted the Council's case, but, as the Council is aware, the dissolution of Parliament at that time prevented the bills becoming law, and since then the Council's opponents in Parliament by means of opposing on second reading, have succeeded in effectually preventing the Council's case from receiving an impartial hearing. It is satisfactory, however, to learn from the committee's report that the majority against the Council on the last occasion was much smaller than hitherto, being only 79 as against 162 in 1896. It would seem that Parliament is gradually realising that the Council represents the general opinion of London on this question, and sooner or later it will prevail over the various opponents who have hitherto combined to place obstacles in its way.

The Council's bills for supplying additional water from Wales had to be withdrawn, in view of the action of Parliament upon the Purchase Bill. At the same time it is to be regretted that this proposal was not investigated; since the Council was prepared, rather than lose the results of some years' costly preparation, to limit its demand if necessary to obtaining merely the power of future purchase over the watersheds in Wales — a suggestion which even the Royal Commission seemed to view with favour.

That some comprehensive scheme for amplifying the supply of water to London is urgently necessary the Water Committee is evidently quite convinced. They do not believe that the companies' plan of constructing enormous reservoirs in the neighbourhood of Staines and storing therein the winter floods of the Thames can ever be anything but a stop-gap. They present a most instructive table showing what the natural flow of that river has been from May to December, in the years 1898 and 1899, as compared with the average flow over a period of 17 years. From this it appears that whilst the average daily flow in September, over the period of 17 years, has been 491,500,000 gallons, that in September, 1898, was only 213,400,000 gallons, and whilst the average in August has been 472,900,000 gallons, the flow in August, 1899, was only 231,100,000. When it is borne in mind that the Balfour Commission reported that London within 31 years from now will require to draw 300,000,000 gallons a day from the Thames, and that in the opinion of that Commission,



at least 200,000,000 gallons should be left at all times to flow down the river, it is clear not only that the amount of reservoir accommodation necessary for storing the winter floods in sufficient quantity to provide for summers like those of 1898 and 1899 will be far greater, and far more costly than the Balfour Commission ever suspected, but also that in the end London will be compelled to resort to new sources at much greater expense than if this were undertaken now. I believe that if the present opportunity is lost future generations will look back to our action with much the same feeling of regret as that which we have expressed at the action of the City of London when, in 1612, it gave the control of the New River undertaking over into private hands.

## 25. THE RIVERS COMMITTEE.

The work of the Rivers Committee has been very little heard of until recently. Occasionally it has reported to the Council information as to the proceedings of the conservators of the rivers Thames and Lea, but this has practically concluded its duties. It has, however, been engaged for several years in collecting information with respect to two important questions which now, through no particular action of the Council, but by the ordinary march of events, have been brought into prominence, and thus in the past year, under the chairmanship of Mr. Idris, it has been called upon to advise the Council as to the action it should take with respect to the steamboat traffic on the Thames and the condition of the Port of London.

For a long time it has been evident that the accommodation for passenger traffic on the Thames has been far behind what is usually required in a great city. The Council has been memorialized by riverside authorities and others urgently requesting it to establish a municipal service. This the Rivers Committee have hesitated to recommend until they had made a careful investigation into the whole question, particularly with reference to the possibility of freeing the piers from the charges at present levied by the Thames Conservancy. They have now obtained reports as to the practicability of the Council establishing a remunerative service of its own, and have arrived at the conclusion that there is no reason why this should not be successfully accomplished. At the date of the report which I am reviewing, the committee had come to no definite decision, but since then circumstances have forced their hand. The river service on the Thames has practically collapsed, and if anything is to be done to prevent a total cessation of all passenger traffic it is evident that the Council must act with promptitude and

energy. The committee have accordingly recommended the Council to apply to Parliament for power to run steamboats on the Thames, and the Council has assented to this proposal practically without dissent. I trust that Parliament will pay respect to so unanimous a decision, and that we may be able to free London from the reproach of having the worst service of river steamboats in any European capital.

The subject of steamboats is, however, far outweighed in importance by that of the Port of London. In this case also the problem has forced itself upon the Council. For years it has been a matter of common knowledge that the Port of London is getting behind the rest of the world. The channel of the Thames is insufficiently deep for modern vessels. The docks are inadequate and unsuitable for the rapid clearance required by modern trade. The dues and charges operate in several cases as a deterrent to shippers. Many owners continue to ship to and from London only because the circumstances of their particular business oblige them to do so ; but at any moment some little change in commerce or in custom may withdraw from London a large portion of its shipping trade. The fact is that, in this matter, it is no one's duty to look after the interests of London. Foreign governments spend huge sums on improving the accommodation at ports such as Hamburg and Antwerp. Municipal authorities do likewise at many of our own British seaports. In London alone nothing is done, for the reason that Parliament has never put London into a position to manage its own affairs. Years ago the Corporation of the City of London was not only in name but in practice the port authority, but it has long since allowed this function to slip out of its hands. As the result of continuous piecemeal legislation there are now no fewer than 56 different authorities exercising control over the Port of London. In the opinion of the Rivers Committee at least 42 of these more or less conflict or overlap. The simplification of this complex system of administration should be the first consideration of Parliament.

But in addition to this, the present state of the dock accommodation needs immediate attention. The Rivers Committee, in the inquiry which it has been making during the past three years, has arrived at the conclusion that the present dock system does not meet the requirements of London commerce ; and perhaps the best proof of the correctness of this conclusion is afforded by the fact that in the session that has just expired the dock companies themselves have found it necessary to promote bills in Parliament for obtaining additional powers. This action on the part of the companies has brought matters to a head, and

in March last the Rivers Committee recommended the Council to approach the President of the Board of Trade with a view to a public inquiry into the condition of the Port of London being held before any further powers should be bestowed on the companies. Mr. Ritchie received a deputation from the Council, and in reply promised that such an inquiry should be initiated. Since then a commission has been appointed for the purpose, and will shortly be receiving evidence. The report of the Commission will, I believe, be fraught with consequences of the greatest moment to the metropolis, and we will hope that steps will then be taken of sufficient magnitude to secure to London for ever its position as the first port in the world.

## 26. THE LOCAL GOVERNMENT AND TAXATION COMMITTEE.

The Local Government Committee is not one of those committees that hide their candle under a bushel. On the contrary, the subjects with which it deals give rise to constant and animated debates in the Council. Last year, under the guidance of the late Mr. Costelloe, and after his death of Mr. Percy Harris, it has on several occasions absorbed a goodly portion of the Council's time, notably when it detained the Council into the small hours of the night to discuss the provisions of the London Government Bill.

The interest taken by the Council in the work of this committee arises from the nature of the work itself. Let me shortly run over the subjects dealt with in the annual report, and this alone will show over how large a field of interesting questions this committee ranges.

The committee advises as to the framing of by-laws, and in the past year it has, after long negotiations with the Home Office, local authorities, trade representatives and others, settled by-laws for compelling all vehicles to carry lights; for prohibiting newsvendors from shouting in the streets; for safeguarding persons engaged in window-cleaning; and for abolishing to a certain extent the flash lights which nightly render London hideous. How far these regulations will effect their object remains yet to be seen. This will rest with the police, and not with the Council. The committee has dealt with questions of appointing auditors of the vestries in Bermondsey and St. Luke; of uniting parishes, as in Deptford; of altering the number of guardians of the poor in Fulham and Hammersmith. It has been occupied in arranging for the preparation of a map of London showing all alterations in buildings. It has collated, as usual, the statistics prepared from time to time by the Council, and

has issued the ninth annual volume of London Statistics, a book originated by this committee, which affords to the student of municipal subjects the best, if not the only, means of acquiring information upon current questions of metropolitan administration. It has had to consider the approaching census of 1901, and has, as on former occasions, applied to the Local Government Board in the hope of inducing that body to introduce certain reforms into the method of classifying the persons enumerated. It has carried into effect the resolution of the Council which aimed at an assimilation of the County Council franchise to that of the new borough councils. With this view the committee drafted a bill, which, if passed into law, would not only have accomplished this object, but also materially simplified and improved the system of election generally. This bill, however, has not been accepted by Parliament, but a measure has been passed in the last session enlarging the register of electors for the County Council so as to embrace all who have votes for the borough councils. It will have the effect of adding some 100,000 electors to our register, chiefly lodgers and persons having the service franchise. I only hope that this numerous section of our population will recognise what has been done for them by taking an interest in the proceedings of this Council and recording their votes when the date of election arrives.

The question of assessment of property in London continually occupies the time of the committee. Although the Council is hardly recognised by the law as having anything to do with this subject, it has, as the central rating authority, found it necessary from the very commencement to take some action to ensure that the valuation in the various parishes of London should be so conducted as to ensure just treatment as between one part of the county and another. With this view it has on the occasion of each quinquennial revaluation invited a conference of the assessment authorities to meet in this hall, and frame certain regulations and rules of practice and procedure which, if carried into effect by every such authority, would result in an uniform system of valuation all over the county. I am glad to say that the result of these voluntary conferences has been to achieve a very much fairer system of assessment than that which held good before the Council came into existence, but there remains a good deal yet to be done. At the conference that has taken place in the past year the discussion of the various principles still waiting to be settled lasted over eight days, and at the close of the proceedings the following resolution was unanimously passed—"This conference trusts that the decisions arrived



at will be loyally enforced by the several assessment authorities of the metropolis, as without the assistance of such authorities uniformity of rating under the present law will not be obtained." Such a resolution passed voluntarily by representatives from all parts of London is a strong proof of the necessity for organising these conferences, but at the same time the fact that any such resolution should be passed at all shows that, however much the various bodies have been agreed in them, yet, in practice, there has still been considerable diversity.

By far the most important subject with which the committee had to deal in the past year was the bill introduced by Her Majesty's Government for the better government of London. This bill aimed ostensibly at abolishing the existing vestries and district boards, and replacing them by a smaller number of reformed councils with somewhat altered powers and in some cases different areas of jurisdiction. So far as this object was concerned, the Local Government Committee entirely approved of the bill; but when the precise terms of the measure were made known, it became clear that they were of a nature to which this Council could not assent. It proposed to divide London into separate boroughs, each borough having its own mayor, aldermen and council. This process of division the committee looked upon as likely to weaken the united power of London as a whole. I will not re-open the controversy as to how far this was intended by the promoters of the bill. I will only say that I fear it may be the effect of the Act, although I hope that it may still be possible to engender in the new local authorities sufficient appreciation of the importance of co-operation to enable us to maintain in practice the principle of the unity of London. But, apart from this, the bill contained numerous propositions which would have been most deleterious to London. It was not restricted to the reform of the vestries. It attempted a considerable reduction in the powers and duties of the County Council. It proposed to leave in the hands of the Privy Council and the Local Government Board very wide powers of settling the areas and, in future, the duties of the new authorities. It withdrew from the local councils the women who in the London vestries and boards of guardians have done good service. It proposed that only two-thirds of the councillors should be directly elected by the ratepayers. It perpetuated the system of the re-election of part of the council only in each year, which most persons interested in London administration have found to be unsuitable to London conditions. It gave no safeguards against improper expenditure on the part of the borough councils, and, in lieu of

enforcing a proper government audit, continued the inadequate system which has hitherto prevailed. It attempted to simplify the complexity of London rating and yet proposed no alteration in the antiquated system of overseers. Whilst purporting to reform local government in London on the lines of the municipal corporations, it left the governing body of the City of London absolutely untouched. It did not attempt to rearrange the non-poor law duties of the guardians or the Metropolitan Asylums Board. It refrained from enlarging the operation of the Act passed to equalise rates. To these and to many other matters which they set out in their report, the committee felt that the Council should formally object, and they accordingly reported in great detail on the bill and advised that certain recommendations should be adopted. After a very prolonged sitting the Council formulated its opposition, and although on the main principle of the bill the views of the Council were disregarded, yet, in most of the points of detail to which I have alluded, the Council's views prevailed, and before the bill passed through the House of Commons it had been cleared of a large number of its objectionable features and had assumed a very different form to that in which it was introduced.

Since the Act was passed the Privy Council has been engaged in constituting the new councils, altering boundaries and in generally bringing the Act into operation. The Local Government Committee have had to watch these proceedings very carefully, and have advised the Council in making the necessary representations to the Commission appointed for these purposes. I am afraid that the net result of all this legislation has not been to simplify very much the complications of London government. For example, in the case of Penge, the Commissioners have decided, in opposition to the views of the Council, to detach it from London for the purposes of local administration and include it in Kent. The original difficulty arose from the fact that Penge was in London for some purposes and in Surrey for others. By the new scheme Penge remains in Surrey as before for poor law administration and the parliamentary owners' vote, and moreover, it remains in London so far as the parliamentary occupying voter is concerned, and thus the inhabitant of Penge is in a more anomalous position than he was before, as he will now find himself concerned in the affairs of three different counties instead of only two as hitherto. The difficulties in registration caused by this Act are not restricted to Penge. I will not expatiate upon the confusion which has arisen in connection with registration in almost every constituency in London. One can only regret

that a measure affecting so large a population was not prepared with more accurate knowledge of the peculiar conditions existing in the metropolis.

The Act, however, has been passed, and it will rest with all who are really anxious for an improvement in London government to do their utmost to render this reform effective. In my opinion this will depend upon two factors. Firstly, it will depend upon the constitution of the new borough councils. With this I have nothing to do, except to express a hope that the electors of London will realise from the outset the necessity of making the election an event of metropolitan importance, and thereby attracting to the new councils men who are worthy and capable of the responsible work which will fall to them. Secondly, the success of this reform will depend upon the relationship which will arise amongst the twenty-eight councils themselves, and especially between those borough councils and this County Council. We must not allow the idea of independence as between the different localities in London, which this Act undoubtedly accentuates, to prevent us from working for the good of London as a whole. I do not make this remark without reason. Experience has showed us how essential it is that the metropolitan local authorities should be induced to consider questions from a point of view outside the narrow scope of their own administration. For instance, we need improved tramways to relieve the congestion of the centre of London, and yet we are prevented from constructing lines to the suburbs because the local authorities, across whose district the lines must pass, do not think that they themselves will gain any advantage from it. We propose to purchase a market, and manage it for the benefit of the whole mass of consumers in London, and we find a local authority that already owns another market successfully opposing us, because it fears that its own revenue will suffer. The same tendency will operate in a hundred different ways, and the only means by which it can be counteracted will be for this Council at the earliest possible moment to take some steps to bring itself into close and friendly touch with the borough councils. We have on several occasions already obtained most useful results by means of conferences of representatives of the local authorities. I trust that when the new councils are established we shall take every opportunity of conferring with them upon many of those London questions which can only be settled upon a satisfactory basis by a general consensus on the part of London administrators.

## 27. THE PARLIAMENTARY COMMITTEE.

With the report of the Parliamentary Committee I am forced to deal very cursorily by reason of the many subjects

with which it deals. The Council knows well enough the very heavy duties which fall to the share of this committee. Since the time when Lord Rosebery remarked that he could never discover when Mr. Charles Harrison, who was then chairman of the Parliamentary Committee, "ate, drank or slept," it has ever been a matter of wonderment how the member occupying this position succeeds in keeping in his mind the details of all the bills which it is his duty to watch on behalf of the Council. I notice that in the report of the session's work of 1899 no fewer than 113 bills are cited as being such as required, to a greater or less degree, the attention of the Parliamentary Committee. Of course the majority of these are either public bills having no chance of becoming law, or private bills, the amendment of which in detail may be left to the officers of the Council; but still there is always a constant stream of intricate and important questions arising which often detains the committee at its weekly meeting until long past seven o'clock. It has often occurred to me that it would afford a useful lesson to some of those people who hold this Council in low esteem if they would honour Mr. Cornwall with a visit on a Thursday afternoon and listen to the discussions which arise upon the various parliamentary proposals which the committee find it necessary to criticise or oppose. Whether the visitor were impressed with the conduct of the proceedings or not, I feel certain that he would come away with a sense of satisfaction at knowing that there is here, at any rate, a body of men whose sole object is to protect the interests of the public against the numerous attempts on the part of promoters of private bills to take advantage of the general indifference to public affairs that characterises the ordinary Londoner.

Mr. Cornwall's report divides itself into two parts, the first treating of the proceedings completed in the parliamentary session of 1899, and the second of work done in preparation for the session of 1900.

The bills promoted by the Council in 1899 were of exceptional magnitude and importance. The Council's private bills were eight in number. In the General Powers Bill, the two most important proposals, amongst a large number of other matters, were the alteration in the Council's representation on the board of the Lee Conservancy, and the purchase by agreement of the freehold interest in Spitalfields-market. The first of these was withdrawn upon the Conservancy undertaking to bring in a bill themselves in the next session, and the proposal with respect to Spitalfields-market, although it passed through the Commons, was lost in the Lords by reason of the opposition of the City of London.



The Improvements Bill contained, *inter alia*, the new street from Holborn to the Strand, involving a capital expenditure of over £5,000,000, being the largest improvement scheme ever placed before Parliament, and accordingly giving rise to many points of extreme difficulty. This bill became law, as did also the Money Bill. The same success did not, however, attend the remaining bills promoted by the Council. The bills dealing with the question of the London water supply were withdrawn by reason of the delay in the report of the Royal Commission, and the Tramways Bill, which proposed to give the Council power to introduce electrical traction into the metropolis was blocked by the opposition of certain of the local authorities.

Of the bills which the Parliamentary Committee were instructed to oppose, two of the most important were the London and South Western Railway Bill and the Bill for the amalgamation of the South Eastern and the London, Chatham and Dover Railway Companies.

In the case of the South Western Railway the principal question arose out of the company's proposal to absorb a very considerable area of house property and streets for the enlargement of Waterloo station. After lengthy negotiations between the committee and the directors of the company, a satisfactory arrangement was concluded, under which the latter undertook to form a new approach to the station and to contribute to the widening of neighbouring streets. They also assented to certain proposals made by the committee with a view to securing, as far as possible, that persons of the labouring class displaced by the clearance should be properly re-housed.

In the case of the South Eastern and London, Chatham and Dover Railway Bill the committee succeeded in obtaining clauses preventing any increase in the fares, and causing an improved and cheaper service of workmen's trains. Another important bill of the session of 1899 was that promoted by the East London Water Company, which would have authorised that company to raise £1,400,000 for the purpose of constructing additional reservoirs in the Lea valley, and also to take more water from the Thames. This bill was opposed by the Council on the ground, firstly, that the proposed reservoirs would be the most expensive and least effective remedy for the want of water under which the company admittedly suffered; and secondly, that if the bill became law the powers should only be granted on the understanding that they would not operate to enhance the value of the undertaking in the event of an early purchase by a public authority. The history of the bill was remarkable. In the first place

official reports were sent in to the Select Committee by the Local Government Board to the effect that the bill was, in the opinion of that board, unnecessary. This, however, appeared to have been done without the knowledge of the President of the Local Government Board, and the committee passed the bill, and when Mr. Stuart moved in the House of Commons the insertion of a clause, framed so as to prevent enhancement of value, the President of the Local Government Board voted against this amendment, and the bill passed that House without any provision for the protection of the public. However, when the bill came before a Committee of the House of Lords it was rejected entirely. This session the company have renewed their application and have obtained the power they sought, but only subject to the clauses upon which the Council insisted last year, and which the directors then refused to accept.

In addition to their ordinary duties, the Parliamentary Committee last year had to arrange for the Council's evidence being given before the Select Committee of the House of Commons, which was specially appointed for the purpose of inquiring into the powers of the metropolitan gas companies. The Council's case against the companies was fully established, and the report of the Select Committee contains some important recommendations for reducing the standard price of the gas supplied by the Gas Light and Coke Company and other companies, for altering the sliding scale, for transferring the Gas Light Company's area south of the Thames to the South Metropolitan Company, and for regulating the charges for gas supplied through automatic meters.

The labours of the Parliamentary Committee for the session of 1900 have been even heavier than for that of 1899. This year the number of bills to which attention has had to be directed has again amounted to about 100. The Council itself has been promoting no less than eleven private bills of great complexity and importance.

The General Powers Bill, containing a large number of different proposals requiring legislative sanction connected with the administrative work either of the Council or of some of the local authorities, has passed practically unaltered.

The Improvements Bill has also been piloted successfully through Parliament. The principal item in this was the Westminster improvement, to which I have already referred. Of the twenty-four improvements dealt with by this bill, eleven, however, had to be withdrawn, as they formed part of the Council's scheme for light railways or for extending its tramways.

The two bills relating to tramways have had a stormy passage in Parliament, but have on the whole emerged in

a fairly satisfactory form. I have already given the substance of these measures in referring to the report of the Highways Committee.

I have also already spoken of the bill promoted by the Council for legalising the use of the portable photometer. This bill was eviscerated by the omission of its principal proposal, but it passed into law for the purpose of effecting certain restrictions upon the gas companies in their power of charging for the use of prepayment meters.

The bill for the construction of a tunnel from Rotherhithe to Ratcliff passed into law after a lengthy discussion in Committees of both Houses. A considerable opposition was raised by the Corporation of the City of London because part of the land scheduled for the tunnel comprised the Shadwell-market. Upon the ground that this might result in the Council becoming a competitor in market accommodation with the City, the Corporation claimed that the Council should be restricted from taking the market, and this was ultimately agreed to.

The desire of the City to prevent any markets being used for the benefit of the whole of London has resulted in the House of Lords throwing out the Council's bill for the purchase and improvement of Spitalfields-market. In this case the Parliamentary Committee succeeded in the House of Commons not only in carrying its own proposals, but also in defeating a bill introduced by the Corporation to entitle the City to purchase this market. The chief argument used by the counsel for the City was that the London Government Act had constituted in London new "borough authorities with all the rights and privileges of ordinary boroughs and municipalities, except on certain things, such as sewage, &c." and this argument evidently weighed with the committee. It is the first practical example of the working of the London Government Act. In the inquiry before the Commons it was distinctly shown that the object of the Council was the cheapening of supplies to the London consumers generally, whilst that of the Corporation was the protection of its own markets from competition. If the special interest of one section of London are to prevail against those of the whole community it will not be long before the Council will find it necessary to invite Parliament to inquire thoroughly into the question of market accommodation generally, with a result that, I do think, will not be satisfactory to the existing market authority.

Of the private bills promoted by other bodies in this session, the most important have been the bills of the gas companies and of the East London Water Company, the Lee Conser-

vancy Bill, and the bills of the dock companies. I have already recorded the results of the gas and water bills. The Lee Conservancy Bill was promoted by the conservators in pursuance of their undertaking last year to reform the constitution of that body. The interests of London in the proper preservation of the flow of the Lee, both as regards its purity and its navigation, are so great that this Council was of opinion that the representation of London should be considerably increased. It therefore proposed that there should be seven representatives of the Council in lieu of one as under the former constitution. In the end Parliament has allotted two seats out of 15 to the Council, and has given one representative to West Ham and one to the local authorities in the north-east corner of London. It has reduced the representation of the water companies from four to two, and has given three additional seats to local authorities in Hertfordshire, Essex and Middlesex, and has altogether withdrawn the representation of the land owners. The new authority will therefore be a much more popular body than hitherto.

The bills relating to the docks were two in number. One of them was introduced principally for the purpose of amalgamating the London and St. Katharine's Docks Company and the East and West India Dock Company, and to this no objection was raised, certain clauses affecting the right to levy dues having been withdrawn, and the bill became law. The other proposed important changes in the rights to levy charges at present possessed by the London and India Docks Joint Committee, and as this raised the whole question of dock management the Council objected to the passing of the bill before a full inquiry should have been held on the position of affairs in the Port of London, and in the end the bill was rejected by the House of Commons on the second reading, and a Royal Commission has been appointed to carry out such an inquiry.

#### CONCLUSION.

I have now exhausted the committees. I trust I have not altogether exhausted the Council, for I wish to add one or two concluding words.

In the first place, I ought not to close a review of the year's work with a reference only to the labours of our committees; because alongside of the 137 voluntary workers there is an army of some 10,000 paid workers, who, though paid, are none the less deserving of recognition. Whether we consider the skilled heads of our departments, upon whose advice the greater portion of our decisions are arrived at, or the clerk or draughtsman in the office, or the constable, inspector, fireman,



or artisan, outdoors, I believe I may assert that this Council and the public have a staff which, taken all in all, is second to that of no other municipality in the world. Looking back over eleven years of service on this Council, I am struck by the small number of cases of misbehaviour among our employees. In particular, how rare have been the instances of anything that can be called corruption! With a staff that is so numerous, so constantly brought into contact with persons who have great interests depending upon the action of one or other of our officials, it is no small matter that we should be able to depend upon the straightforwardness of those who serve us. I believe this satisfactory result is due to two causes, firstly, that the officials of this Council have a pride in keeping up the reputation of the public service; and secondly, that from the very outset of its career the Council has set its face against allowing any member of its staff to make money outside his public salary. If a superior officer is known to be making money, even legitimately, a subordinate may think himself justified in adding to his salary, even illegitimately. I trust the Council will never depart from this salutary rule. It has not prevented us obtaining some of the best chief officers that any public authority could wish to possess. The heads of our departments are exceptionally able, hard-working, and conscientious, and above all they set the highest example to the men under them. In this respect they have been well led by our clerk, and we must all of us regret that Mr. Stewart has found himself obliged to give up the post the duties of which he has so well and so honourably fulfilled.

Lastly, may I say one word as to the future. That the future of London rests with this Council there can now be no doubt. Its position as the central administrative body for London is now assured, notwithstanding the attempts to belittle it that have been continually made by a certain section of the community. By reason merely of its representative character it has wound itself with wonderful rapidity into the life of the masses of our city. Whereas twelve years ago not one Londoner in twenty knew of the existence of the Metropolitan Board of Works, now there is hardly a man or woman who has not heard of the County Council. On the first occasion when we met in this reconstructed hall Lord Rosebery, pointing to the room, said "*Si monumentum quæris, circumspice*," "If you wish to see the work of the Council, look around you." I believe I may now broaden out this sentiment beyond the walls of this chamber, beyond the mere circle of street improvements, fire stations and parks that we have given to the people, into the homes and hearts of five millions of people who recognise that through good

repute and bad repute this Council has honestly laboured to do what it could to promote the welfare of all classes of the community.

But although the future existence of this Council is assured, its future success must depend upon the men who constitute it. I own to feeling some anxiety lest the London elector in his usual apathy may not fail to realise how essential it is to keep up the calibre of this important body. We all know how difficult it is already to induce men to stand for the Council, and then how hard it is to make the voter vote. May I not in the interests of our great city appeal for a little more self-sacrifice on the part of our citizens—self-sacrifice in offering to share in a public work which is doubtless onerous, but which, at the same time, is highly interesting; self-sacrifice in devoting some little attention to the questions raised at elections; self-sacrifice in making some attempt to ensure that in the future, as it has been in the past, men are returned to this Council who have no other object than that of serving honestly their fellow men.

*9th October, 1900.*







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London County Council.

ANNUAL REVIEW

OF THE WORK

OF THE

LONDON COUNTY COUNCIL

AND ITS COMMITTEES

FOR THE

YEAR ENDED MARCH 31ST, 1903,

BY

THE RIGHT HON. THE LORD MONKSWELL,

*Chairman of the Council.*

OCTOBER, 1903.

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# London County Council.

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ADDRESS by Lord Monkswell, Chairman of the Council, on the Proceedings of the Council and its Committees during the year ended 31st March, 1903.

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6th October, 1903.

GENTLEMEN OF THE LONDON COUNTY COUNCIL,

Custom prescribes that I should inflict upon you a summary of the proceedings of the Council which have taken place, not during my term of office, but during that of my predecessor; so it falls to my lot to commemorate events, such as the Coronation, in which Sir John McDougall bore, on behalf of the Council, a most conspicuous and honourable part, while my successor will have to chronicle events of special interest to myself. I suppose this arrangement, whereby no one is permitted to refer to matters of peculiar interest to himself, is due to the apprehension of prolixity; or perhaps the rule has been thus laid down because it is thought that the invincible modesty of your chairmen would prevent them from doing full justice to their own share in the work of the Council. But whether what you dread most in a chairman is modesty or prolixity, the fact remains that, for some reason or another, the task of summarising the events of interest to the Council, and the proceedings of the Council during the term of office of his predecessor, devolves upon every chairman, and to this task I now address myself.

First of all, it is my duty to refer to the losses we have sustained by death or resignation. We have to lament the death of Sir Arthur Arnold, a former chairman, whose excellent work on the Council is well known to you. And I am sure you will allow me for a moment to transgress the prescribed limit of time by referring to the more recent deaths of Sir John Hutton, another former chairman, and Sir Vincent Barrington. I am specially desirous of saying something about the latter, because no one on the Council knew him nearly as well as I did, who was his life-long friend and associate. Sir Vincent Barrington, sometime an alderman of this Council, was a remarkable man. He was absolutely devoid of fear, and put his courage to good uses. He gained the silver medal of the Royal Humane Society, and was the working head of the Red Cross Society. He went all through the wars between France and Germany and Russia and Turkey; he traversed Spain during the Don Carlos insurrections, constantly risking his life, not to kill but to keep alive. He was an excellent mathematician, and was greatly instrumental in putting the statistical department of the Council on a proper footing.

In the death of Mr. Nathan Robinson the Council has sustained a great loss. He was a very remarkable man—an excellent example of a most useful type of councillor—the man who through every disadvantage has struggled to the front by his own pluck, industry and perseverance. Nathan Robinson entered the workshop at the age of 9; and only 7 years afterwards had so conspicuously interested himself in current politics as to attract the attention of the police as a prominent Chartist orator, and he remained an ardent Radical to the last. I saw him on his death-bed when he thought he had only a few hours to live. The ruling passion was as strong as ever, and he had just sent off a political telegram. The serious and businesslike energy he threw into the enormous amount of work he did for the Council, was tempered with genial humour. A large crowd attended his funeral, and I don't suppose there are a dozen men now alive who are more popular in any part of the Empire than Nathan Robinson was in St. Pancras.

I now come to the work of the several Committees, beginning with the General Purposes Committee, of which, as vice-chairman of the Council, I took charge.

In referring to the committee work of the Council I propose to be bold enough—or as I dare say some of you will think foolish enough—to stray out of the beaten track, and not to confine myself to the distribution of platitudinous praise, but to offer such criticisms as appear to me to be just. I hope my Moderate friends will not be very hard upon me for taking this, as they may consider, unconstitutional course. They must recollect that I have the misfortune to be a Radical both by birth and by conviction, and I would also urge, in mitigation of my conduct, that, although I do not think I am unduly loquacious in the Council, I have been tightly muzzled for six months, and this is the only opportunity I shall have, during my year, of expressing my opinion.

Mr. Torrance went so far, in his address from the chair, as to hint that some councillors thought that the constitution of the General Purposes Committee was not perfect. I propose to go a good deal further than Mr. Torrance, and to tell you all that is in my mind with regard to this Committee, after having served for a year as its chairman.

Let me preface my criticism by remarking that the reports of the Committee are received, and rightly received, by the Council with all the respect due to the high standing of its members. I say rightly received, because, in spite of certain peculiarities in its method of conducting business, the decisions the Committee arrive at are usually characterised by good judgment and common sense. But it must be added that this great Committee, the adviser of the Council on matters of supreme importance, a committee that voraciously attracts to its service a large proportion of the best talent of the Council, in one respect compares unfavourably with all the other Committees. In every other Committee, I think without any exception, the members come together with the sole object of discussing the agenda. The decisions at which they arrive may be wise or unwise, but, at any rate,

they have been well considered by every one of the members present. In the General Purposes Committee this is not always the case; for unless a subject of absorbing interest is under discussion, many of the members indulge in the pleasures of conversation.

Now the General Purposes Committee is composed, as we all know, in great part of the most respected and distinguished members of the Council, and all of them must have achieved some measure of success above the common in order to belong to that select society. It is clear, then, that the conversation which interferes with business is not the mere hare-brained chatter of irresponsible frivolity. Far from it: I am convinced that the matters under discussion are of high importance, and are discussed in all seriousness. In a large gathering of the principal members of the Council it is certain that councillors will find much to talk about, even if they have not—and in many cases I suspect they have—previously arranged to make the committee-room their place of meeting. I do not venture to call attention to the working of the General Purposes Committee because I am dissatisfied with the results obtained—I have already said that the results are good; but what I desire to draw particular attention to is the waste of very excellent material caused by the present method of manning the Committee. Now, in the old days—when we were called “megalomaniacs,” and it was held by ministers of the Crown that the powers we were originally granted were quite enough for us; when we were represented as a set of incompetent fanatics and faddists, who would be conferring the greatest possible boon on London if we would only execute the happy dispatch—in those days a waste of energy on our part was not, perhaps, at all events by some people, considered a matter of much importance. But now things are altered: the boot is on the other leg. Ministers of the Crown no longer wait with complacency for our dissolution. They no longer ignore our business capacity, and jeer at us for faddists and fanatics. On the contrary, they come cap in hand to us; they entreat us to dabble in docks and water; and such is the supreme confidence they put in our good sense, discretion, and power of work, that they have thrust upon us, whether we will or no, the supervision of the whole of the education of this vast city, and with this object have destroyed an excellent, and beyond controversy successful, public body of professed educationists, whose place we have now to take in addition to the very heavy duties already cast upon us. Poor megalomaniacs! If it is true that our vaulting ambition has drawn upon us the work of the London School Board, we are, indeed, hoist with our own petard, and clearly it is our first duty to husband our strength in every possible direction; and I would begin with the General Purposes Committee. The chattering habits of that Committee can, I think, be traced to two defects in its constitution. In the first place it is too big, and in the second place the selection of it is faulty. The natural tendency of the members of a very large and very important committee to consult together in groups, is intensified by the circumstance that the greater



part of the members come in as chairmen of the various standing committees whose special duty it is to attend to the business brought forward by, or connected with, the particular committees over which they preside. The situation, then, is this—the size of the Committee is, in itself, destructive of the sense of individual responsibility, and, moreover, the greater part of the committee consists of persons who regard one particular portion of the committee's work, rather than its work as a whole, as specially within their province. The remedy, I venture to think, is simple and obvious. Reduce the numbers by taking away all the chairmen of committees, except, perhaps, the Finance and Parliamentary chairmen; for those committees are peculiarly favoured by the attentions of the General Purposes Committee. If it is objected that the dozen or so members who remain could not man the numerous sub-committees, let them be empowered to add outsiders to those sub-committees, and also let the full committee have a similar power to add outsiders for the discussion of any particular matter, and let the chairmen of the committees whose work is affected by any proposal before the General Purposes Committee have a right to be invited to take part in the discussion of such proposal. In the Houses of Parliament the practice of adding members for the discussion of particular questions is often adopted, and gives satisfaction. Before I refer to the subjects dealt with by the General Purposes Committee, I ought to mention that Mr. Cornwall has adopted what bids fair to be the best method yet tried for the purpose of keeping order. He gently but firmly refuses to go on with the business until some approach to silence has been arrived at.

The Committee has dealt during the year with many matters of interest and importance. The preparations for the Coronation and the King's procession were delegated to them by the Council, which also entrusted them with the task of drawing up the address presented to the King at Buckingham-palace by Sir John McDougall on the conclusion of peace in South Africa. The Committee also advised the Council to name the Holborn to the Strand crescent "Aldwych," in accordance with Mr. Dickinson's happy thought, and the new main street was named "Kingsway."

The Committee also made the necessary preparations for the conference on the lack of employment, resulting in the delegation, to a small committee of councillors and others, of the task of framing what is generally acknowledged to be a very excellent report.

The Committee drew up an elaborate set of regulations under the Small Holdings Acquisition Act, 1899, which were adopted by the Council.

The London ambulance service was thoroughly investigated and reported upon by the Committee, and so were the causes of London fogs. In the latter case the result was not as enlightening as some of us had anticipated.



The Committee did all it could to help the School Board out of its educational difficulties, and propounded a scheme for the education of imbecile children.

The necessary rearrangement of the Parliamentary business, owing to the resignation of Mr. Cripps, occupied much of the time and attention of the Committee.

I pass on to the Committee whose report is always in the forefront of our agenda, namely—

#### THE FINANCE COMMITTEE.

This is one of the committees that has not adhered to the rule, commonly observed, of changing its chairman every year. Lord Welby is so manifestly the right man in the right place that no one would dream of aspiring to fill his chair while he is still willing to preside. He and the comptroller, Mr. Haward, are recognised on all hands as being the two great financial pillars of the Council. For me to discant on their merits would be as impertinent as it is unnecessary. To do so would be like painting the lily or gilding refined gold, which, as Shakespeare observes, "is wasteful and ridiculous excess."

The report of the Committee calls attention to a matter that has lately been the subject of much discussion in the Council—namely, the difficulty of regulating the capital commitments of the Council, which often are, and indeed sometimes must be, greatly increased by demands not contemplated when the year's budget is framed. This subject is now under consideration by a joint sub-committee of the Finance and the General Purposes.

With regard to our financial position, it is gratifying to note that our credit stands as high as ever when compared with other first-class securities. The growth of our indebtedness is, indeed as the Committee note, a matter deserving consideration; but, as they point out, though our net unremunerative debt, after deducting assets, was in March last  $7\frac{1}{2}$  millions more than in 1889, still, owing to the rise in rateable value, the rate in the pound in respect of the net debt for 1903-4 is less than a penny more than it was in 1889-90. The county rate was  $15\frac{1}{4}$ d., or a halfpenny more than in 1901-2, not a large increase having regard to the demands of the Highways and Improvements Committees.

I now come to—

#### THE ASYLUMS COMMITTEE.

This Committee is manned almost exclusively by those members of the Council who take their work very seriously. Some members, I believe, take a real pleasure in going over an asylum; but I should think, judging from my own feelings, that most of the Committee find very little pleasure in the society of lunatics, and serve only from a sense of duty. It is not a Committee favoured by those who wish to run up a long score of attendances; for an attendance at an asylum takes up the greater part of a day which, from the point of view of the

attendance scorer, might be more profitably occupied by excursions from room to room of this building. The spirit of reform that burns so ardently in the heart of the chairman, Mr. Hubbard, permeates the Asylums Committee and its officials. The asylums are kept thoroughly up to date. At Bexley, I observed that the open air cure for consumption was being carried on with some vigour. I saw a considerable number of consumptive lunatics huddled together under an erection like a large umbrella in pelting rain—very good for them, no doubt, but perhaps rather uncomfortable. In that asylum they have devoted a ward to the interesting experiment of placing selected male patients under the charge of female attendants. This experiment I was assured had succeeded admirably, for it was found that the patients exercised greater self restraint, both in the matter of language and behaviour, than they had hitherto done under male attendants.

There is a special sub-committee charged with considering the best methods of housing and treating lunatics. Among so many reformers one would hardly have thought such a committee necessary. The sub-committee have had under consideration sketch plans for a new asylum of a modified villa type designed by the asylums engineer, to whom the Council is much indebted for an immense amount of work of first rate quality. The epileptic villa colony has been completed, but drainage difficulties retarded the reception of patients. The drainage is now connected with the Epsom Council's sewage farm, and there are now some 200 persons at the colony. We may hope that before long the plans for a villa asylum will be proceeded with; but for the moment the question of finding accommodation with the least possible delay has induced the Committee to recommend the Council to sanction the erection of a replica of the Horton Asylum.

The question of accommodation has become all the more pressing since the lamentable fire at Colney Hatch Asylum has deprived us of accommodation for 300 patients. One is glad to find that even that terrible catastrophe has not been altogether without a gratifying feature, for a great deal of heroism was displayed by the staff in rescuing the lunatics.

Ever since its establishment the Council has been striving to house in its own asylums all the lunatics for which it is responsible. The deficiency, which 13 years ago was over 28 per cent., is now less than 3 per cent., although during that period the patients have increased from 10,104 to 16,957.

A bill to establish in London receiving houses where alleged lunatics should be sent instead of the workhouse, has met with approval on all hands, but our efforts to pass it through Parliament have not been successful. I know how difficult it is to induce the House of Commons to take an interest in any domestic question outside party politics; but I do hope that some time or other that House will devote a few minutes to the consideration of this measure, though it only concerns people who have no vote and no influence.

I pass on to—

#### THE BRIDGES COMMITTEE.

This Committee, under Lieut.-Col. Sheffield, has again had trouble over the Vauxhall-bridge. For reasons which, if my memory serves me, are not exhaustively stated in the report, it has been decided to build the bridge of steel, instead of concrete with granite facings. This alteration will effect a slight economy. The Highways Committee have been relieved of the charge of the maintenance, repair and cleansing of the Thames embankments, and that work now devolves upon the Bridges Committee. The report states that this has resulted in an economy of the staff, showing a saving of about £1,200 a year. The lighting of the bridges is now placed on a uniform system acceptable to the Thames Conservancy.

I pass on to—

#### THE BUILDING ACT COMMITTEE.

This Committee, under the chairmanship of Dr. Longstaff, has been busy during the past year in considering the question of amending the London Building Act, 1894, with special reference to the safety of the inmates of high buildings in case of fire. A bill with this object was introduced, but encountered a great deal of opposition in Parliament, and the subject was referred jointly to the Building Act, Fire Brigade, and Parliamentary Committees for report.

I pass on to—

#### THE CORPORATE PROPERTY COMMITTEE.

This Committee, under Mr. Jackson, deals with the Council's rent roll of £327,286, and has many duties to perform. It has made good progress with the ground plan of London. It has carried into effect the temperance policy of the Council by allowing 113 licences to lapse at an approximate cost of £300,000; and, in accordance with the mandate of the Council, it has inquired into the administration of the charities in London for the blind, and as the result of its investigations recommended the Council to ask the Charity Commissioners to ensure a larger portion of the income from the endowments for the blind being set apart for the establishment and maintenance of workshops. This the Council did, and the Commissioners consulted with the governing bodies of some of the charitable trusts, with the result that it was found that the existing need of pensions was too great to permit of any diversion of funds. The Committee then suggested that the General Purposes Committee should consider the question of establishing a municipal workshop for the blind.

I pass on to—

#### THE ESTABLISHMENT COMMITTEE.

This Committee, under the then deputy-chairman of the Council, Mr. Henry Clarke, has had, as usual, a busy time. The date for the annual revision of salaries was altered by the Council from April or May to February. The Committee had under consideration the question as to

the application of classified salaries where clerical work is of an ordinary routine character. Telephonic communication has been improved; the Council has entered upon the trade of bookbinding; and additional regulations have been made for controlling the purchase of office furniture, some symptoms of extravagance in that direction having been manifested. I may add that this matter was most carefully and minutely looked into by Mr. Clarke.

The report, of course, refers to the perennial question of the accommodation for the staff. It appears that only 481 persons are housed in the main building and 578 outside. That is not an ideal state of things; but another feature is much worse—namely, the shockingly inadequate accommodation, both in the main building and elsewhere, for the persons in our employ who, in return for the excellent service they give us, are entitled to ask that the conditions of their service should be such as to afford them a reasonable amount of comfort in the discharge of their duties.

I pass on to—

#### THE FIRE BRIGADE COMMITTEE.

This popular Committee, under the chairmanship of Mr. Allen, has been doing its work steadily and well. Good progress has been made towards the completion of the scheme, sanctioned by the Council in 1898, for the further protection of London against fire, and some work has been done outside that scheme. Under the advice of the late chief officer, Captain Wells, two additional superintendents and a store officer have been added to the list of the higher officials of the brigade. The total expenditure on maintenance was £224,141, as against £213,820 for the previous year.

The extremely satisfactory feature of the fire statistics of the year is that the proportion of serious to slight fires, which has been decreasing steadily during the last five years, has now reached the very low figure of 1 in 46. This result is no doubt partly due to the gradual increase in the number of fire alarms, hydrants, and other appliances for dealing with outbreaks of fire, but also the brigade may justly attribute some part of the improvement to increased smartness and promptitude of the men in the discharge of their duties. Indeed, it seems to me that there can be no better test of the efficiency of the fire staff than the extent to which serious fires have declined.

Station officer West was presented by Lady McDougall with the silver medal for extraordinary bravery.

I pass on to—

#### THE HIGHWAYS COMMITTEE.

This Committee, which Mr. Benn has had the unusual honour of presiding over for several years in succession, has issued a report which is, I calculate, about three times as long as the whole of my address, and, when I mention some of the matters with which it deals, its length is not surprising. The mere bald enunciation of its duties fills a page.



The report goes, as it is bound to go, into detail with regard to the various purchases of tramways recently acquired or to be acquired, and every one of these purchases involves, to make the story intelligible, reference to several Acts of Parliament and Provisional Orders, and a good deal of correspondence with the Board of Trade, and occasionally a reference to arbitration ; also a reference to the much-debated decision of the Council to restrict advertising on tram-cars. Then comes the pecuniary results of the year's working ; the arrangements as to the staff taken over ; a description of the services, including workmen's cars and all-night services ; the reduction of fares ; and, more important than all, a careful history of the reconstruction of the tramways for electrical traction, together with some prophetic observations as to the probable pecuniary result of such reconstruction. The contractor and the Works Committee are both employed, and hon. councillors who have a talent that way will soon be furnished with abundant materials for a comparison between the two methods. The Committee also enumerate, and to some extent comment upon, the various tramway schemes either in progress or authorised. In this connection the action of Parliament and the veto of local authorities come in for notice, as well as the schemes put forward by the local authorities. The Committee then deal with the construction of subways for pipes and wires, and thence by a natural sequence they diverge to the subject of shallow tramways, recount the history of their parliamentary struggles, and set forth the action of the Council. Then the Light Railways Act, 1896, comes under review, with special reference to the proceedings of the Middlesex County Council and the Crystal Palace Light Railways and Tramways Company. Then electric lighting orders are passed under review, which gives the Committee reason to refer to what is the best form of meter, and how the accounts of electric companies ought to be framed.

Then the question of the generating-stations for the supply of electricity in bulk is discussed, together with the whole question of the purchase, by municipalities, of electric companies supplying electricity in bulk without regard to areas, various municipalities being allowed to combine in a purchase. Again, the breaking up of public thoroughfares is alluded to, but, pending the report of the Royal Commission on locomotion, the matter is in abeyance.

The lighting of the Thames-embankment is also discussed, together with the erection of the Boadicea statuary group, from the inscription on the pedestal of which I learn that the purists call her "Boudicca."

The action of the Council under recently-conferred powers of dealing with the construction of railway stations is dealt with.

Such, in outline, are the matters discussed in the Highways report. I enumerate them, partly because I desire to be excused from the impossible task of making a short epitome of the information therein contained, and partly in order that any one interested in any of these matters may know where to refer for instruction.

I will, however, try to select a few facts that I hope may be of special interest to the Council.

At midnight on March 31st last year, at an agreed price of £50,000, the Council took over  $2\frac{1}{2}$  miles of tramway from the South-Eastern Metropolitan Tramways Company. The fares were reduced, and the employees benefited, at a cost to the Council in respect of both operations of £1,450 a year.

At midnight on November 21st last year the whole of the South London Tramways Company's undertaking was transferred to the Council at the price of £229,210, including horses and rolling stock. Reductions in fares have been made, and the employees are taken over and treated like the other tramway employees under the Council. The length of these lines is  $13\frac{1}{4}$  miles, and the amount spent in reduction of fares and improved conditions of labour is about £8,800 a year.

The tramway accounts I propose to leave to the next chairman. On that head I will only observe that very nearly a million is to be spent in the immediate future on electrification, but that some of this expenditure will be useful to tramways to which such electrification is not now applicable, and that when we are in a position to obtain power from our own generating-stations we shall effect a considerable economy.

I may add that the powers and conditions of the breaking up of public thoroughfares is a question that is now assuming large proportions, and that the Council should keep its eye fixed upon the necessity of bringing to bear reasonable powers of purchase in the case of companies supplying electricity in bulk.

I pass on to—

#### THE HISTORICAL RECORDS AND BUILDINGS COMMITTEE.

The proceedings of this Committee, which during the year has taken over from the Building Act Committee the duty of naming streets and numbering houses, always attracts a good deal of attention, and under the chairmanship of Mr. Granville Smith it has had, as usual, rather a stormy existence, the storm centre being the Horniman Museum. In the management of this munificent gift to the Council we all take a deep interest, and the most diverse opinions are freely and confidently expressed. During the year some extremely interesting presentations have been made to the museum, and Mr. Horniman, jun., one of the members of the Council, has added to the great debt of gratitude we owe to his father, by the gift of an ornamental fountain. One serious defect in the management of the museum has been put right—namely, the occasional failure of the electric light, which has led, as the Committee observe, to unpleasant consequences. “On these occasions,” they say, “it was difficult for visitors to find their way out, as in both galleries the floor is covered with show cases, and persons were liable to fall against the cases and injure themselves with the glass. Moreover, the confusion caused by the sudden darkness afforded any evil-disposed person an opportunity of abstracting valuable articles from the collection.” The

report does not mention to what extent the evil-disposed persons availed themselves of these opportunities ; but even the sternest critic of the proceedings of the Committee will admit that they were justified in asking the Council to spend a small sum in setting up an emergency installation, which we are all glad to hear "has acted with complete success." The Committee note that during the year about 1,000 volumes have been added to the 9,400 already in the library of this building, and that the work of publishing the Council's records is satisfactorily proceeding.

I pass on to—

#### THE HOUSING OF THE WORKING CLASSES COMMITTEE.

This Committee, on whose proceedings the eyes of London are specially turned, has done excellent work under the chairmanship of Sir William Collins ; and on the 18th of February last the King and Queen gave a practical proof of their interest in the housing question by visiting the newly opened dwellings on the Millbank estate. Their Majesties inspected both an occupied and an unoccupied tenement, and the Queen made a suggestion, acted upon by the Council, that more cupboards should be provided.

From April to July last year a joint Committee of both Houses of Parliament sat to consider the re-housing obligations that ought to be imposed in respect of the displacement of the working classes consequent on improvements or otherwise. The report, while recommending, in accordance with the view put forward by the Council, that the re-housing obligation should be imposed in respect of all persons displaced, added a proviso that this obligation should extend not to the actual number of persons displaced, but to the number for whom the accommodation destroyed provided without overcrowding. To this limitation the Committee and the Council are strenuously opposed.

The catering question in municipal lodging-houses has occupied the attention of the Committee, and the Council in February last gave instructions that powers of direct catering should be sought by us.

I regret to find that it has been decided that a brewer is entitled to compensation when a tied house is taken over by the Council and the licence allowed to lapse.

A very interesting experiment is about to be tried on the Webber-row area—namely, a model lodging-house for women ; and plans were submitted to the Council in December last. It is to be four storeys high, and to accommodate 57 women. There are to be three double, and 51 single, cubicles.

The rehousing of the 3,700 people displaced by the Holborn to the Strand improvement will be provided for on five estates bought for that purpose near the improvement, as well as on the Millbank estate.

The Committee gives a long list of accommodation provided where no obligation to rehouse exists, and mention that they have been actively engaged in searching after sites upon which to build under



Part III. of the Housing Act, 1890. The buildings on the Totterdown-fields estate are, as the Council has reason to know, in a forward state. Negotiations have proceeded satisfactorily with Sir Samuel Montagu in respect of his generous gift to the Council of £10,000, which it is proposed to make use of in connection with the White Hart-lane estate, consisting altogether of about 225 acres, of which 178 acres are to be developed at once.

The Committee also had no hesitation in recommending the Council to buy a site on Brixton-hill. This decision, it may be observed, though ultimately arrived at without hesitation and adopted by the Council, was strenuously opposed by some of the more fashionable residents in Brixton, whose objections were most carefully weighed. This Committee, in common with every other Committee of the Council, always listens with respect and attention to the views put forward by rate-payers or any inhabitants of London, whether rich or poor.

I may here state, on the authority of Sir William Collins, that the Council's dwellings erected under part III. of the Housing Act, 1890, "have been built and managed without having caused the slightest expense to the ratepayers." I forbear either to endorse or challenge this statement, which is the subject of vehement denunciation on the part of some councillors. The Committee have continued to prosecute inquiries with regard to workmen's trains, and the Council, in accordance with the recommendation of the Committee, has made an application to the Board of Trade to hear a case against the Tilbury Railway Company.

The Committee have in several cases during the year taken action under Part II. of the Act with regard to the clearance of small insanitary areas, in conjunction with metropolitan borough councils.

Particulars are given of contracts completed, and of dwellings completed and opened, during the year ended March 31st last, from which we learn that 4,576 persons have been provided for during the year at an estimated cost of £217,676. We also learn that contracts have been entered into, during the same period, to house 4,459 persons for the sum of £277,277.

The general summary of the work of the Committee shows that up to March 31st last, 16,555 persons have been displaced or are to be displaced from insanitary areas; that the number of persons provided or to be provided for is 98,108; that the estimated value of the land for building purposes and cost of buildings erected, and for which plans are in course of preparation, is £4,853,000; and, lastly, that the estimated cost of the clearance of insanitary areas is £1,131,900.

This summary of the work of the Committee from its inception, represents no small amount of labour and responsibility, cheerfully undertaken by the Committee and its officials.

I pass on to —

#### THE IMPROVEMENTS COMMITTEE.

This Committee, under the chairmanship of Mr. William Davies, has, as usual, been very active. Indeed the energy of the Committee is only



limited by considerations of finance. The aspirations of the Committee are prodigious. A vast number of schemes are suggested by individual members with vivid imaginations, many of which are looked upon with favour by the Committee, but are not brought forward in the Council because it is felt that the more unimaginative members, under the lead of the Finance Committee, would be certain to cause their rejection; and, indeed, the Council does not always sanction schemes sent up by the Improvements Committee.

Among the 32 improvements that the Committee have in hand there are several of great interest and importance. The new thoroughfare from Holborn to the Strand will occupy the attention of the Committee for some time to come, and the question of the widening of Southampton-row is being pressed forward. In connection with these improvements, and with the projected widening of the Strand, our statistical officer has been set to work to estimate the money value of the loss of time occasioned by the block in the traffic occurring at the junction of Wellington-street with the Strand and of Southampton-row with Holborn. The detail of the statistics obtained is so minute, and the calculations based on them so intricate, that I feel myself quite unable to check the result arrived at, namely, £7,180 a year in respect of the Wellington-street stoppage, and £3,430 a year in respect of the Southampton-row stoppage. I observe that this calculation does not include stoppages incurred by persons not travelling on business, a very proper limitation; but the report does not enlighten our curiosity as to the measures taken to discriminate between the old gentleman in the 'bus who is keeping an appointment in the City, and an old gentleman, of similar outward appearance, who is on his way to Exeter Hall. Among the interesting improvements in hand may be mentioned those in the neighbourhood of the Houses of Parliament and known as the Westminster improvement, and the widening of Kensington High-street and of St. George's-place, Knightsbridge.

I cannot quit the subject of improvements without saying a word on a matter that Mr. Benson has frequently brought before the Council, namely, the unjust incidence of the cost of improvements as between present and future ratepayers. This injustice is strikingly manifested in the case of the Holborn to the Strand improvement, where the gross cost is very large and the net cost, after deducting recoupment, comparatively small. The result is that for the next two or three years the ratepayers will pay interest on the sum borrowed to meet the gross cost, while their successors will pay only on the net cost—the difference between the two payments amounting to about  $\frac{3}{4}$ d. in the pound on this improvement alone. Mr. Benson contends that the interest on the gross cost, or at all events the interest on the difference between the gross and the estimated net cost, should be allowed to accumulate and be added to the principal till the recoupment has come into play. A similar course is adopted in the case of railways, where interest is paid to the shareholders during construction. The application

of this procedure is demanded with much greater force in the interests of justice in the case of improvements than in the case of railways; in the latter case, indeed, there is no question at all of justice but merely of convenience. If the investor in a new railway is not permitted to draw interest on his money from the railway company during construction, he has the remedy in his own hands. He can put into the railway a part only of the amount he has to invest, and pay himself interest out of the remainder. For instance, if he has £1,000 to invest he can put £900 into the railway, and keep the remaining £100 to tide over the period before his investment becomes remunerative. The present ratepayer, however, has no means of adjusting the burden between himself and his successors. The injustice is obvious, and admits of the simple remedy I have pointed out. The only reason I have ever heard against Mr. Benson's proposal is that the Council is apt to outrun the constable in the matter of improvements, and that it is a good thing to put obstacles in the way of its extravagance. I cannot help thinking, however, that some better method might be devised of checking extravagant expenditure on improvements than to insist on the Council having to commit a palpable injustice in carrying them through. It is doubtless a noble thing for a ratepayer to reflect that he is paying far more than his fair share to beautify London for the benefit of posterity, but the ordinary Peter may be forgiven if he fails to see why he should be robbed to pay Paul.

I know there is another, and a greater, injustice of which we have to complain with regard to the payment for improvements, namely, that the owners of ground values are not directly called upon to contribute anything towards improvements from which they derive an enormous benefit. The remedy for this state of things is, as we all know, not, however, easy of application; and I hope the simple and obvious remedy for the injustice that now exists as between the contributions of present and future ratepayers, will be at once applied by Parliament. As to this, the facts are so plain that no inquiry by a Royal Commission is necessary.

I pass on to—

#### THE INDUSTRIAL AND REFORMATORY SCHOOLS COMMITTEE.

It is satisfactory to find that during the past year the numbers at Feltham school have steadily increased, and still more so to find that in the opinion of H.M.'s inspector the industrial training is "now probably better than in any other industrial school," and that the record of convictions and reconvictions is very low. The report on Mayford too is satisfactory. Mr. Lampard is to be congratulated on the work of his Committee. The success of the Council's Industrial Schools and agencies is largely due to the unremitting exertions of Mr. Edric Bayley.

I pass on to—

#### THE INEBRIATES ACTS COMMITTEE.

This Committee, under the chairmanship of Mr. Yates, begin their report by disabusing the Council of an impression that has been

erroneously promulgated to the effect that the judicial decisions have practically done away with the black list. Fortunately this is a delusion. In September last year the lady superintendent, Mrs. Matthias, resigned, and her place was filled by Miss Cater, the assistant superintendent. It is satisfactory to find that last year the farm was worked without loss to the Council. The boys at Feltham Industrial School have had their clothes repaired by the inebriates, and a hope is held out that in the near future the inebriates will make the boys' socks. The increase of work done by the inebriates will, it is stated, result in a considerable saving to the Council. Mr. Yates and his Committee have performed a most disagreeable duty zealously and well, and our best thanks are due to them.

I pass on to—

#### THE LOCAL GOVERNMENT AND TAXATION COMMITTEE.

It is impossible to do justice to the work of this Committee, under the chairmanship of Mr. Wilberforce, in the very short time at my disposal, and all I can do is to indicate in a few words the scope and objects of the task assigned to them.

The subject of the greatest interest and of the most far reaching importance referred to them by the Council is the question of the taxation of ground values; and on the 4th of March last year the Committee were instructed to report upon the proposals in the minority report of the Royal Commission on Local Taxation, then recently issued, which recommended such a tax. In the following October the Council sent Mr. Sidney Webb to represent it at a conference of municipal representatives called by the Corporation of Glasgow on local taxation, and at that conference the frequently expressed opinion of the Council was endorsed, and the justice of a tax on ground values affirmed. The conference appointed a committee to draw up a scheme for such taxation; and the result of their deliberations will, I hope, aid Mr. Wilberforce and his Committee in the difficult task assigned to them.

The equalisation of rates, in spite of recent legislation, has been only very partially effected. In the County of London the rates range from 9s. 10d. in Bow to 6s. 1d. in St. Anne's, Westminster. Moreover, the London Government Act, 1899, has created a perfect maze of difficulties around this question of the equalisation of rates, not only by the alteration of boundaries, but by the introduction of a new system of apportionment inconsistent with previous legislation. Such being the state of things, the Council will give Mr. Wilberforce credit for great moderation of language when he contents himself, after exposing the hopeless and absurd tangle in which the subject is now involved, with the unadorned statement that "it is obvious that the existing conditions as to the equalisation of rates are not satisfactory."

The Committee note that on the formation of the metropolitan boroughs by the Act of 1899 alterations of boundaries were made "for



simplification or convenience of administration." The intention was excellent; but one result of the steps taken with that object was to make confusion worse confounded by altering the boundaries of metropolitan boroughs without introducing corresponding changes in the parliamentary and other electoral areas; so that, whereas under the Act of 1888 municipal and parliamentary boundaries were coterminous, under the simplification plan of 1899 in some cases, as in Chelsea, they are very different. These alterations of boundaries have, as the Committee observe, "given rise to difficulties in the preparation of the lists and registers of voters, and no doubt also caused perplexity to voters." The alterations in the boundary of the County of London have, moreover, given rise to financial complications more serious than those caused by the alterations within the county. In the task of supervising the expenditure on the registration of electors of London, the Committee have revealed proceedings which showed that it was high time some central authority was empowered to intervene and keep the parochial views of the metropolitan boroughs in check. In one borough, for instance, it was found that all the printing for the borough council was open only to printers carrying on business, and paying rates, within the borough.

The law as to the provision of polling districts is unsatisfactory. While in seven metropolitan parliamentary boroughs the power of providing those districts rests with the Council, in the remaining 21 boroughs it rests with the justices, and, moreover, it is doubtful whether the Council can alter polling districts, when once it has fixed them, for county council elections.

The Committee have grappled valiantly with the duty of making by-laws for the good rule and government of London. Interesting debates have taken place in the Council on recommendations of the Committee as to street cries and street music. At the present time it would seem that a triangular duel as to these matters is going on between the Committee, the Council, and the Home Secretary.

Much valuable information as to railway season-tickets has been compiled by the Committee, under an instruction by the Council to consider what steps could be taken to secure the issue of third-class season-tickets. By order of the Council this information has been laid before the Board of Trade.

The eleventh and twelfth annual volumes of London Statistics were issued during the year, and the fifth volume of the Statistical Abstract for London; and the Council authorised the expenditure of £100 for printing certain statistics obtained from the census returns of 1901, and additional information given by the Registrar-General to the Council, together with a report thereon by our statistical officer.

I pass on to—

#### THE MAIN DRAINAGE COMMITTEE.

This Committee, under the chairmanship of Mr. Goodman, has done its work at a somewhat less cost both on capital and maintenance



account than in the preceding year, due in part to a change in the engines in use at the Crossness outfall, which has reduced the consumption of coal by nearly 25 per cent., and at Abbey-mills pumping-station a prospective economy is prophesied by the use of surface condensers.

The Committee devote several paragraphs to rebutting the statement that sludge vessels are apt to "dump" their cargoes in the river estuary instead of going to the Barrow Deep. This aspersion on the proceedings of these vessels is emphatically denied; but, even if the sludge vessels did offend in this respect it would seem that very little harm would be done, for I read, with somewhat mixed feelings, that a recent investigation made by the chemist "shows that the number of bacteria in the so-called polluted water of the Barrow Deep is frequently found in ordinary drinking water."

The Committee state that "during the past year considerable progress has been made with the extension of the main drainage system," and various questions involved in the execution of work of such magnitude have largely occupied their time and attention. Among the works completed in the year is the new sewer from Gainsborough-road, Hackney-wick, to the Abbey-mills pumping-station, at an approximate cost of £135,000.

I pass on to—

#### THE PARKS AND OPEN SPACES COMMITTEE.

This Committee, under the chairmanship of Mr. John Piggott, thus summarises the work of the Council in providing open spaces—"The Council has already assisted in preserving for ever no less than 88 playing spaces for London, and has, as occasion has arisen, enlarged several of them, and also some of the places which were under the control of the Metropolitan Board of Works, and has expended about £600,310 in so doing."

During the year Avery-hill, 84 acres, was acquired for £25,000; parliamentary power was sought to authorise the purchase of about 41½ acres of the Eltham-park estate, the Woolwich Borough Council contributing one half, and in the contract for purchase the Council is, on the insistence of the vendor, bound not to allow the sale of intoxicants on the land.

At Golder's-hill the Council has endorsed the action of the Committee in throwing open an orchard of 2½ acres to the public. The Committee state that the orchard will be under proper police protection. Whether, as the Committee seem to think, the fruit would, without police protection, be sufficiently safeguarded by the public announcement that it is reserved for the hospitals and not the County Council is, perhaps, open to some doubt.

During the year the negotiations for the purchase of Marble-hill and for the preservation of the view from Richmond-hill proceeded satisfactorily. The owner of the estate adjoining Marble-hill voluntarily gave

a valuable covenant not to build on a property adjacent to that estate, and in other respects very materially assisted the special committee having the matter in charge, to bring the negotiations to a successful issue.

On 28th February, Brockwell-park extension,  $42\frac{1}{2}$  acres, was opened by the chairman of the Committee, who also on 14th March opened Northbrook-park, 7 acres, and on 19th May (Whit Monday) the Manor-house-gardens,  $8\frac{3}{4}$  acres. On 28th February, Wandsworth-park, about 20 acres, was opened, by way of a change, by Col. Rotton.

The Council agreed during the past year to buy two small open spaces in Stepney, amounting together to  $\frac{3}{4}$  of an acre, for £13,000, towards which the vendor will contribute £3,000, and the Stepney Borough Council £1,500.

The most striking purchase of the year, and one that has been abundantly discussed, is the acquisition of 803 acres at Hainault Forest, outside the county, at a cost to the Council of £10,000, various societies and private persons, particularly Mr. E. N. Buxton, who has taken an immense amount of trouble in the matter, contributing the remainder—in round figures £12,000—or £22,000 in all. The Committee estimate that an expenditure of £1,500 on capital account, and £300 a year for maintenance, will suffice.

The conveyance to the Council of the Ranger's house, Blackheath, was completed during the year.

The Council contributed £12,000 towards the laying out of an addition ( $8\frac{1}{2}$  acres) to Fulham-park, the Borough of Fulham undertaking to maintain the park.

During the year the Committee has been instrumental in adding more than 1,000 acres of land to the open spaces of London.

The bands cost just over £12,000, against not quite £10,000 the previous year; and I believe the public got value for their money. Thirty-one band performances were given at the King's coronation dinners.

Students of the question of municipal trading will be interested to learn that the experiment of providing municipal boats at Finsbury, Victoria, and Battersea parks has proved a financial success, the balance in favour of municipal management working out at £430 4s. 3d. for the year; but, as the Committee point out, "this sum does not represent the total advantage to the public. Under the old licence system the minimum charge was 1s. an hour for two persons, with a further charge of 6d. for each extra person, whereas now the charge is 6d. an hour for the use of the boat, irrespective of the number of persons who may occupy it."

Various efforts made to obtain leave to build on disused burial grounds have been strenuously, and in nearly all cases successfully, resisted by the Council on the representations of the Committee.

His Majesty the King has graciously presented the Council with four swans from the Thames.

I pass on to—

### THE PARLIAMENTARY COMMITTEE.

This Committee acts principally upon the initiative of other Committees, and therefore we find that most of the matters dealt with in the report of Mr. Radford, the chairman, are noticed in the reports of the other Committees. The report contains a long list of important legislative proposals, including the Council's London Water Purchase Bill, which, as we all know, has been superseded by legislation thought by the Council to be detrimental to the interests of London. The report draws attention to the remarkable Parliamentary manœuvre employed to reverse, on an equality of votes, a decision arrived at by a majority of 6 to 3 in the Joint Committee of both Houses to which the bill was referred. That decision was one of great moment—namely, to delete entirely from the proposed Water Board the representation of the metropolitan borough councils, which, in the bill as drafted, would have constituted nearly half the Board.

The Government having received this decision “with profound regret,” the chairman, Lord Balfour of Burleigh, proceeded to take steps to get it reversed, and, accordingly, evidence was called for on behalf of some of the borough councils, apparently under the impression that they would be able to justify the position taken up by the Government. What honourable members who have read the evidence may think on this point I don't know; but I would remind the Council that Lord Llandaff poured scorn and contempt upon this evidence, and stoutly maintained in debate in the House of Lords, without any serious attempt at contradiction, that the evidence left the case for the representation of the borough councils utterly smashed and pulverised, and in a far worse plight than before that evidence had been adduced. However, the exertions of the Government succeeded in whipping up on their side half the Committee; but half and half will not ordinarily suffice to rescind a resolution, so Lord Balfour, taking advantage of the rule in the Lords that on an equality of votes the Noes have it, engineered a motion to the effect that the Committee adhered to its recent resolution. This motion on an equality of votes was lost, and the negative, that the Committee do not adhere to its resolution, was carried. The part in this proceeding that strikes me as particularly objectionable is the farce of calling for evidence that was not to be judged on its merits, but to afford the pretext for reversing a decision disapproved of by Ministers. The interests of London are too vast and important to be made the sport of jugglery of this kind. The one promising feature in the Water Board is that it has secured the services as its chairman of a councillor so able, so popular, and so industrious as Mr. Beachcroft, to whom I offer my sincerest congratulations. I may remind the Council that the Water Board consists of 66 members, of whom the Council appoint 14, the borough councils 27, the City of London and the City of Westminster 2 each, various local bodies outside London contributing the remainder.



Among other Parliamentary failures was a private bill promoted by the Council to enable the City and the borough councils to exercise, in combination, their powers of purchase of electric lighting companies under the Acts of 1882 and 1888. The second reading in the Commons was carried by a majority of 30, but the Bill was defeated in the Select Committee. Bills to facilitate the provision of allotments in London and to make efficient polling arrangements failed to become law.

Almost all the bills promoted in 1902 for adding to the means of locomotion in London were rejected, and the Council pressed for a complete inquiry into the subject, which is now, as you are aware, being undertaken by a Royal Commission, and on that Commission two of our members, Lord Ribblesdale and Sir John Dickson-Poynder, have seats. The Council has appointed a very strong special committee to conduct our case before the Royal Commission.

I pass on to—

### THE PUBLIC CONTROL COMMITTEE.

This Committee, under the chairmanship of Mr. Squires, has, as usual, in the performance of its multifarious and important duties displayed unbounded energy. Coroners, their courts and their salaries, infant life protection, death certificates, the storage of dangerous substances, weights and measures, the adoption of the metric system (and the consequent plaguing of children before their time with the mystery of decimals), shop hours, smoke nuisance, markets, the diseases of animals, gas supply, testing, and prices, are among the matters delegated to this Committee. The Council, however, being presumably of opinion that Mr. Squires and his colleagues wanted a still wider field of work, added last year the supervision of the telephone service, a subject which might well engage the sole attention of a committee, and, besides this enormous morsel, they have to help the Council to administer the Overhead Wires Act, 1891, the Canals Protection Act, 1898, the Highways and Locomotives Act, 1878, except as to bridges, and the Locomotives Act, 1898; they have, moreover, to superintend the proceedings of the London Hydraulic Power Company.

On perusing the report one cannot help wishing that Mr. Squires was Home Secretary, and then, no doubt, something would have been done to amend the law as to death certificates, which is universally condemned by the medical profession as being capable of easy manipulation, in his own interest, by any moderately astute murderer. It is also surprising to find the Home Office continuing to refuse to give effect to the report of the Select Committee on Petroleum recommending the raising of the flash point from 73° to 100°. As regards the attitude of the Home Office on this question matters are going from bad to worse. Lord Ridley simply ignored the recommendation, but his successor, Mr. Ritchie, flatly refused to legislate because he disagreed with it, and set his opinion above that of the Select Committee.



A curious difficulty has arisen, owing to the greatly increasing desire of the publicans to substitute glass for pewter in drinking vessels. These glasses have to be stamped, for which the statutory fee is 1d. a glass, but some local authorities, with the object of attracting the glass trade to their own borders, have undersold their neighbours. The Council, finding the glass trade of London threatened, went one better, and charged nothing at all. It was, however, decided in the law courts that it was illegal to charge less than the full fee. It seems, however, notwithstanding this decision, that there are still districts in the North of England which underbid their neighbours, and obtain, in consequence, a subsidised and preferential trade.

It is impossible, in the short space at my disposal, to go through the whole of the report, and I shall content myself, in conclusion, with noticing that for five years there has been no case of rabies in London.

#### THE PUBLIC HEALTH COMMITTEE.

This Committee under Dr. Cooper has taken vigorous and successful steps to deal with outbreaks of small-pox in common lodging-houses by an exhaustive system of inquiries, and endeavoured, though, unfortunately, without success, to obtain powers from Parliament to deal drastically with the milk supply, to which a considerable outbreak of scarlet fever was attributed. In this endeavour the Council was backed up by some only of the borough councils. Disinfection and other precautions against measles have been put in force. The probability of an outbreak of plague is still in the mind of the Committee. One isolation home to accommodate 54 persons has been retained, and the agreement with keepers of common lodging-houses to enable them to be made use of as isolation homes is still in force, giving accommodation for about 480 persons. The Committee has approached the Local Government Board as to legislation to prevent contamination of shell fish by sewage, and has, with the support of the London local authorities, obtained legislation to prevent contamination of ice-creams. I am glad to report an increase in the number of women sanitary inspectors from 11 to 20.

The Committee does its duty in doing its best to keep the borough councils up to the mark in the matter of sanitary inspection. The Committee has analysed the atmosphere in the "twopenny tube," has turned its attention very seriously to the subject of drainage by-laws, and the condition of the Regent's and Grand Junction Canals. But all this work is by no means sufficient to exhaust the energy of Dr. Cooper and his colleagues. They have long yearned to have the licensing of common lodging-houses, and in the session of 1902, they obtained their desire. This new responsibility entails great labour, and the exercise of a wise discretion, with the object of improving the conditions of the common lodging-houses without harassing them out of existence. I accompanied the Committee on one of the views, and can testify to the zeal and thoroughness with which they discharged their duty.

There is still another new work of great importance that this insatiable Committee has its eye upon, namely, the inspection of kitchens at hotels and restaurants. They have discovered that borough councils have now statutory powers of inspection, of which some had already availed themselves. Now all the borough councils, except two making no reply, have agreed to inspect.

I commend the example of the Public Health Committee to the favourable consideration of the Council. They not only do zealously the work entrusted to them, but, following the excellent example of Oliver Twist, they are always asking for more.

#### THE RIVERS COMMITTEE AND THE WATER COMMITTEE.

The principal duties of the Water Committee, under the chairmanship of Mr. McKinnon Wood, have been transferred to the Water Board, under the chairmanship of Mr. Beachcroft, and I do not think the brief report of the Committee calls for notice.

The report of the Rivers Committee, with Mr. Cornwall in the chair, deals with the great question of the administration of the Port of London. The Committee placed before the Royal Commission much valuable evidence; but, as the bill introduced to carry into effect the recommendations of the Commission has not been passed, the ultimate effect of that evidence upon Parliament must remain for the present the subject of conjecture.

The Committee again brought before Parliament proposals to provide London with an efficient steamboat service; these proposals were, however, rejected, and London still remains without any steamboat service at all, except a few boats that are casually hired out to accommodate pleasure parties. This is a discreditable state of things, for which, however, Parliament and not the County Council is responsible. Most of us, I think, will agree that the proposals put forward this year were practicable and well thought out.

With regard to the report of the Thames Conservancy, it is satisfactory to note that dredging operations are being actively prosecuted, that the large new lock at Teddington will shortly be completed, and that much good work has been effected in the direction of diverting the flow of sewage into the river. Let us hope that the day is fast approaching when Sir John McDougall will, by an artful cast, land the first salmon that for more than a hundred years has visited the shores of Battersea.

I pass on to the report of—

#### THE SMALL HOLDINGS COMMITTEE.

The undertakings of this Committee, under the chairmanship of Mr. Allen Baker, are on a very small scale, owing partly to restrictions, imposed by the Legislature, which we hope Lord Carrington will soon succeed in removing.

The number of tenants of allotments and small holdings under the control of the Council is 734, paying a rent of £355 2s. 10d.

I pass on to—

#### THE STORES COMMITTEE.

This Committee, under the chairmanship of Mr. Pomeroy, did its work for £819 16s. 2d. The total amount paid to firms who received orders was £44,195 13s. The articles required were divided into 20 schedules, containing 1,055 items, exclusive of boots and clothing. The Council will observe with regret that during the last quarter of the year the rejections by the chemist have gone up from 8 to 28 per cent.

I pass on to—

#### THE THEATRES AND MUSIC HALLS COMMITTEE.

This Committee, under the chairmanship of Sir Algernon West, had four more applications for licences than in the previous year. The Committee have exercised the utmost vigilance in enforcing the regulations of the Council as to cinematograph entertainments, and there has been no serious accident, though small outbreaks of fire have occurred that might have proved disastrous but for the precautions taken.

The Council's inspectors under the Explosives and Petroleum Acts have exercised great vigilance.

It is gratifying to note that the Committee and the Lord Chamberlain are working together in complete accord to prevent dangerous overcrowding in theatres, and also with regard to structural requirements.

No serious outbreak of fire has occurred during the year in any place of public amusement.

I pass on to—

#### THE WORKS COMMITTEE.

This Committee, under the chairmanship of Mr. Torrance, was constituted in March, 1902, not only to carry into effect the non-contract work of the Council, but also to make recommendations as to rates of wages and hours of labour in work carried on for, as well as by, the Council within the London radius.

The Committee has, during the year executed work to the amount of £349,153 0s. 8d., of which £304,951 8s. 6d. consisted of estimated works and £44,201 12s. 2d. of jobbing work.

For the year ended Sept. 30, 1902, in the case of estimated works the balance of cost was £16,968 17s., or 7·47 per cent. below the final estimate, and in jobbing works there was a balance of cost below schedule value of £995 17s. 4d., or 4·15 per cent.

The Council will observe with pleasure that no fatal accident occurred to any workman; but a sum of £1,515 14s. 1d. was paid to workmen sustaining injury, being considerably more than the legal obligation.

The total capital expenditure on the Works department up to March, 1903, is £112,267 2s. 4d., of which £15,462 14s. 2d. has been repaid.

The value of the plant and machinery at the various depots was on March 31st last, £40,678 5s. 1d. The total amount paid in wages during the year was £171,601 13s. 9d., and some modification in the rates of wages and hours of labour have been effected.

I pass on to—

#### THE APPEAL COMMITTEE.

This Committee has sat three times on questions relating to drains. One appeal was allowed, one dismissed, and one order varied.

I pass on to—

#### THE SPECIAL COMMITTEE ON NEW OFFICES.

The report of this Committee, under the chairmanship of Mr. Fletcher, was not adopted; but the question of a new site for offices is urgent, and one that the Council will no doubt very seriously consider.

I pass on to—

#### THE TECHNICAL EDUCATION BOARD.

The report of this Board, of which Mr. Henry Ward is chairman, contains matter of the deepest interest. It is most satisfactory to note the large increase in the number of trade classes from 121 in 1894 to 309 this year; the instruction, too, is much more complete than it was, and the classes are larger. It is calculated that the number of apprentices and workmen attending has increased at least fourfold in the nine years.

The number of artizan students in polytechnics is also increasing fast and steadily, the number attending in 1902 being 6,731, against 5,193 in 1901.

The Board's evening exhibitions of £5 a year for 2 years, in science and technology have been much appreciated, and many more could be given with great advantage. There is keen competition for them.

Polytechnic buildings are being enlarged in every direction, to a great extent out of a sum of £40,000 provided by the trustees of the London Parochial Charities. The Council has also several buildings on hand in connection with its own schools.

We must be glad to note that the University of London has recognised a large number of teachers in polytechnic institutes, as teachers of the University. At the Board's initiation a special commercial department has been established at University College School, and scholarships are awarded. Among the numerous successes of the Board's scholars the name of E. Cunningham, senior wrangler, educated first at a board school at Hoxton, stands pre-eminent. The report is copiously adorned with excellent and interesting photographs of the work carried on in the various institutions.

I have now finished with what I may call the more onerous work of the Council, but, as you all know, and no one knows better than Sir John McDougall, we, as representing London, take a part in events of



great national interest. We presented a loyal address to the King just before the illness that caused the postponement of the Coronation; some of us were present at the Coronation, and councillors attended in great force at the Royal procession through London. On that occasion we took our share in the decorations and other signs of rejoicing. We did not, indeed, spend money lavishly in pageants of barbaric splendour, but our proceedings were conducted in a chastened and sober spirit befitting the gravity and importance of the duties we are called upon to discharge.

I look back upon the past career of the Council with satisfaction—indeed, with pride—and to the future with confidence. It appears to me that our experience of the youth of the Council has not belied the promises of its infancy. It is true that on one side of the Council “the thanes have fled” from us; there are not now on the Moderate side of the Council so many men of social eminence as adorned it at one time, but I do not think either the party or the Council is the worse. The standard of industry and of ability is as high now as it ever was. Among our new recruits, who I believe playfully call themselves the “two-year-olds,” are several who have already achieved distinction, and given promise of attaining still greater eminence. One of our younger councillors, the bearer of a much honoured name—Mr. Peel—has done in Parliament excellent and conspicuous service to London, having greatly transformed the London Education Act for the better; another member has recently achieved a most notable electioneering triumph, and I think there is no member of the Council to whom the success of Mr. Crooks is not, on personal grounds, popular. Many members, as we all know, do most valuable and excellent work in committee that the outside world knows nothing of; but they have their reward in the certainty that they are forwarding the best interests of London, and enjoy the esteem and regard of their fellow workers. In conclusion, allow me to say one word in commendation of our admirable staff, whose diligence and devotion is a necessary element in the due performance of the task that London has entrusted to us.









London County Council.

# ANNUAL REVIEW

OF THE WORK

OF THE

## LONDON COUNTY COUNCIL

AND ITS COMMITTEES

FOR THE

YEAR ENDED 31<sup>ST</sup> MARCH, 1905.

BY

### MR. E. A. CORNWALL, J.P.,

*Chairman of the Council.*

NOVEMBER, 1905.

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# London County Council.

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ADDRESS by Mr. E. A. Cornwall, J.P., Chairman of the Council, on the Proceedings of the Council and its Committees during the year ended 31st March, 1905.

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24th October, 1905.

GENTLEMEN OF THE LONDON COUNTY COUNCIL,—

In reviewing the proceedings of the Council during the term of office of my predecessor, Mr. Benn, I shall not attempt to deal with the subjects before me too rigidly in connection with the various committees which administer the services and make separate reports to the Council. We are all members of the Council, and although from the necessities of the case we are, as individuals, compelled to devote our special attention to those of the Council's duties which are entrusted to the care and consideration of one or more committees, yet as members of the Council we are equally concerned in the administration of all branches of the Council's work.

The year is notable for the fact that it has made the Council a different Council from its predecessors. It has witnessed the municipalisation of education by Parliament, and the Council has therefore to administer this great service. Great as were the responsibilities of the Council before last year, it is almost correct for me to say that they have been doubled. Time does not permit me to say all that is in mind with regard to the position in which the Council now finds itself, but I am confident that opportunities will arise in the future for me to bring before the Council and the people of London much that a member who occupies the chair is able to gather up during his term of office. There is one thing, however, that I will say—all that was necessary for the full discharge of the older duties of the Council together with the new, has been accomplished by that unrewarded yet ungrudging devotion which so eminently characterises members of the Council.

In grappling with the tremendous difficulties involved in the taking over of the new duties from the School Board for London and other education authorities I think we may claim that the Council was able to show its capacity to meet the requirements of the enormous population whom it represents and to whom it is responsible. In this task London will ever be indebted to Mr. McKinnon Wood, the Chairman of the Organising Committee, Sir William Collins, the

Chairman of the Education Committee, who by his conspicuous ability has helped the Council to a remarkable degree, also to Mr. Shephard, Mr. Dickinson, Mr. Sidney Webb, Mr. Graham Wallas, the Rev. Canon Jephson, Mr. Allen, and Lord Chelmsford, the chairmen of the various sub-committees of the Council, as well as to members of the late School Board who brought to the Council such ripe experience, combined with a most remarkable loyalty to the new authority.

When strictures are passed upon the Council for the speed with which it occasionally deals with a great part of its huge agenda paper, it is not always sufficiently realised outside the Council that all the proposals therein contained have already been the subject of careful consideration by members who specially devote their attention to that and kindred subjects.

At the commencement of the year under review the various committees were re-organised, and the membership in many cases reduced, in order to meet the new conditions. Several committees were not re-appointed, their duties being transferred to other committees.

The Asylums Committee, under the chairmanship of Mr. Hubbard, continued their work of providing accommodation for the ever-increasing numbers of the population afflicted with insanity. The title of the Bridges Committee sufficiently indicates the more important portion of their duties, carried out, in the year in question, under the presidency of Mr. Straus. The Building Act Committee, with Captain Hemphill for chairman, dealt, as formerly, with most of the matters arising out of the London Building Act and the provision of means of escape in case of fire from factories and workshops. The new Education Committee met for the first time on 25th March, 1904, and appointed Sir William Collins to be their chairman. The Establishment Committee, under the chairmanship of Mr. Cleland, had their former duties, consisting principally of the supervision of the central staff (other than chief officers and the Education department) and the care and management of the central offices, increased by the addition of the work of the New Offices Committee. The Finance Committee, again under the presidency of Lord Welby, continued their role of financial advisers to the Council. The Fire Brigade was the special care of the committee of that name, Mr. Edward Smith being chairman. The General Purposes Committee, over whom Mr. McKinnon Wood presided, have special advisory powers, and also deal with any matters not delegated or referred to any other committee. The Highways Committee, under the chairmanship of Mr. Allen Baker, had their multifarious duties in connection with tramways, Electric Lighting Acts, lighting of the embankments, subways, motor cars, etc., unaltered. The duties of the Housing of the Working Classes Committee, under Mr. Bruce, are sufficiently indicated by the title, and were not changed. The

Improvements Committee, again presided over by Mr. W. Davies, in addition to their former duties in connection with street improvements, were charged with the management and control of the Council's ordinary surplus land. The Local Government, Records and Museums Committee, under Mr. W. C. Johnson, were entrusted with the various duties, relating chiefly to local taxation and local government in London, assessment and valuation, etc., formerly belonging to the Local Government and Taxation Committee, and also with most of the duties formerly falling to the lot of the Historical Records and Buildings Committee. The preparation of the ground plan and the consideration of all general questions relating to public charities and endowments were also referred to them. The duties of the Main Drainage Committee, under the chairmanship of Mr. Goodman, were unaltered and are generally indicated by the title of the committee. The Parks and Open Spaces Committee, under Captain Swinton, had their duties extended by the addition of the management of the Council's small holdings and allotments. The Parliamentary Committee again elected Dr. Napier to the position of chairman. The many and varied duties of the Public Control Committee, this year presided over by Mr. Harben, were further extended by the inclusion of the work carried on by the Council under the Inebriates Acts. The Public Health Committee continued, under the chairmanship of Mr. H. L. Jephson, their numerous duties arising under the Public Health and Common Lodging Houses Acts. The Rivers Committee, under the presidency of Mr. Gilbert, continued their duties with regard to the Thames and Lea and the administration of the Port of London, and had heavy work thrown upon them by the passing of the Council's River Steamboat Bill. The Stores Committee, presided over by Sir John McDougall, had increased responsibilities consequent on the transfer of the very considerable stores used in connection with the Council's education work. The duties of the Theatres and Music Halls Committee, under Mr. Yates, underwent no alteration. The Works Committee, with Mr. Torrance as chairman, carried out all the works which the Council determined to execute without the intervention of a contractor.

In addition, four special committees were appointed: the Appeal Committee, which met only twice during the year, and considered three appeals; the Midwives Act Committee, consisting of the members of the Public Health Committee and three women, which were appointed in the course of the year and elected Dr. Cooper to the post of chairman; and the Officers' (Education) Superannuation and Teachers' Superannuation Committees, both under the chairmanship of Mr. A. J. Shephard; while the Joint Committee on Underfed Children, under the chairmanship of Sir Charles Elliott, continued on the same lines as under the late School Board.

The enormous increase in the Council's responsibilities may be



illustrated by comparing its financial operations in the year 1904-5 with those during the first year of its existence. In 1889 the Council took over a net debt amounting to £17,563,262. At the end of March, 1905, this had increased to £44,620,266, of which £5,622,221 was in respect of remunerative purposes not involving any charge on the rates. A large portion of this increase took place within the year under review, when the outstanding debt of the late School Board, amounting to £11,546,883, was added to the Council's net debt. The total expenditure of the Council has increased from £3,303,923 in 1889-90 to £16,176,040 in the year under review. These figures represent the expenditure under every head of service, including the remunerative services, and on both rate and capital accounts and in respect of loans to other bodies.

Owing to the division of municipal administration in London among a number of central and local authorities, and the extremely complicated condition of London finance, the total amount expended on London local government in the course of a year is not easy to ascertain. I find, however, that for the year 1903-4, the latest for which information is available, it was approximately £19,250,000, an amount comparable with the expenditure of many states. Thus it is within £1,000,000 of that of Belgium, while it exceeds that of Saxony, the Argentine Republic, Norway and Sweden combined, the Netherlands, and Portugal, is double that of Roumania, and more than four times that of Denmark.

While I am in full sympathy with the Chairman of the Finance Committee in his never ceasing watchfulness over the expenditure of the Council and his constant desire for economy consistent with efficiency, and while I know that he does not overlook the fact, yet I must say that many people, who are alarmed at the magnitude of the financial figures of the Council, forget the extent of the area under our government, and the enormous population under our care.

During the year the Council made successful issues of stock amounting to £7,500,000, which represents, however, more than one year's requirements on capital account. The Council advanced to local authorities in the county 150 loans amounting to £3,423,320.

Judgment has been given in favour of the Council's contention that it should retain, out of the income tax deducted from dividends paid to holders of Metropolitan and London County Council's Consolidated stocks, an amount equal to the tax paid under schedule A on the annual value of property in its own occupation. This decision was appealed against by the Inland Revenue, and since the close of the year under review the Court of Appeal has confirmed the judgment of the lower court.

I am glad to be able to record that during the year the Council adopted a system by which it will in future be able to co-ordinate its capital expenditure, and thus regulate to some extent the amount of



its borrowings from time to time. Whether my friend, Mr. Percy Harris, recognises in this new system the co-ordination which he has so often urged upon the Council I do not venture to decide.

Good as our finance undoubtedly is, some better arrangement has long been needed to secure that when its results reach the ratepayer, they should do so on a basis of equality in assessment. The year under review saw the introduction by the Government of the Valuation Bill, a measure which would have largely secured this, and which *inter alia* provided for the Council to be the valuation authority for London. The Bill, however, did not reach second reading.

In view of the approaching quinquennial re-valuation of property in London the Council did what it could in this direction by calling a conference of London valuation authorities at the County Hall, the results of which will, it is hoped, conduce to uniformity of assessment in London. When I remind the Council that the assessable value of London is £41,647,487, the importance of this subject will be obvious.

The promotion of its own Bills in Parliament and the safeguarding of its interests in respect of other Bills always entail a vast amount of work upon the Council. In the session of 1904 the Council promoted six private and three public bills, while 31 private and 59 public bills affecting London required attention or called for some action in Parliament on behalf of London. In the session of 1905 the Council promoted four public and eight private bills, and, in addition, 45 private bills, a Provisional Order, and 52 public bills were dealt with. As the local education authority for London the Council was also concerned in the promotion of two Board of Education Provisional Order Confirmation Bills. The private bills promoted by the Council included a bill providing for the appointment of a Port of London Commission to whom it was proposed to entrust the important duty of administering the Port of London in accordance with present day requirements, and who should take the place of the present inefficient system of management which was so strongly condemned by the report of the Royal Commission on the subject. In the case of the Tramways Bill which was promoted last year, an instruction was moved to the Select Committee of the House of Commons to omit that part of the bill which related to the tramway over Westminster Bridge, Blackfriars Bridge, and along the Embankment. It is interesting to note that this hostile motion was defeated by the casting vote of the Speaker. The bill subsequently passed the House of Commons, and the hopes of the Council were raised in anticipation of its being able to commence the important work of linking up the northern and southern systems of electric traction. These hopes, however, were soon to be shattered, for, on the bill going to the House of Lords, that assembly showed a remarkable interest in London affairs, and, after a debate which created considerable excitement not only in their

lordships' house, but also throughout London, the bill was defeated on second reading.

Attention to the claims of the public health was not a duty which formerly pressed too heavily on local authorities. This state of things, happily, is now past, and there is no branch of local administration which receives more zealous attention. The decline in the death rate during the past sixty years has been very marked. In the period 1841-50, the average rate for London was 24·8 per 1,000; last year it was 16·6. The true importance of these figures is only grasped when one realises that a reduction in the rate of one per 1,000 at the present time means the saving of over 4,600 lives a year.

The administration of public health services in London, apart from the provision of water supply, which, it should be noted, was in the course of the year transferred to the Metropolitan Water Board, and the treatment of infectious diseases, is divided between the Council and the Metropolitan Borough Councils, though in some details the reason for this division is not obvious. Of primary importance among these services is that of providing and administering an adequate or efficient system of sewerage and drainage. Over the whole of this the Council has supervision, but London's system of main drainage, simple and uniform in method, effective in working, and vast in its operations, is the Council's peculiar care. Some idea of the magnitude of the system may be gained from the fact that about 250 million gallons of sewage arrived daily during 1904 at the two outfalls, and were chemically treated. This chemical treatment, it may be mentioned, was only commenced in 1889, and brought into complete operation only in 1892. Incidentally, perhaps one may be allowed to express regret that the whole of the sewage, both in its crude state and when chemically treated, is valueless.

The designers of our system much under-estimated the future growth of the population, and the consequence has been that the Council has had to face the necessity for large extensions, and has already decided to carry out work, including a scheme of flood relief, estimated to cost over four and a half millions. Of this about £370,000 was expended during the year ending 31st March, 1905.

From time to time the authorities of districts outside the county of London have been allowed to drain those areas into the main drainage system.

Apart from main drainage, the duties of the Council, when first appointed, with regard to public health, were very limited and unsatisfactory. Now the Council has the general supervision of the public health in London. In reviewing the past year, it is satisfactory to be able to record that no alarming outbreak of infectious disease occurred in London. The measures taken by the Council in the way of requiring the notification for a portion of the year of chicken-pox (for which in several cases small-pox had been mistaken) and of

bringing home to the public more effectively the dangerous nature of measles had a good effect. An enquiry was in the course of the year instituted into certain cases of enteric fever, the result of which seemed to point to fried fish—that very common article of food amongst the poorer classes—as the source of infection.

This brings me to the question of the food supply generally, as having a very important bearing on the health of the community. Most important is the condition of the milk supply. The powers of the Council and of the sanitary authorities in London with regard to this are in several respects not sufficiently extensive, and the Council last year decided, not for the first time, to apply to Parliament for extended powers. Such a large proportion of the London milk is supplied from country farms, however, that the most extensive powers and precautions in London will not meet the case so long as there is no adequate guarantee of the health of the cows and the condition of the cow-sheds in the country. This is thoroughly realised in certain cities abroad, and one may, perhaps, refer to the case of Boston, in America, where every milk seller is required to specify the conditions under which every cow, from which he obtains milk, is kept, and where no milk is allowed to be sold except from a cow which has been examined by a competent authority and shown to be free from diseases dangerous to the public health.

As regards meat, the great obstacle in the way of efficient inspection in London seems to be the want of public, instead of private, slaughterhouses. In this respect London stands on the same footing as the cities of the United States, but, having regard to the usages of other countries, this moral support cannot be considered of much value. On the Continent, and particularly in Germany, where they have attained a high degree of excellence, municipal abattoirs are the rule in all the large and in many small towns; and they are also to be found in many of the towns in Great Britain. Whatever may be the validity of the hygienic reasons advanced for or against the provision of public slaughterhouses (and in this connection it may be noted that the conference of London authorities on questions of public health passed a resolution that “the time has arrived when private slaughterhouses should cease to exist in London”) humanitarian considerations certainly favour their establishment. At any rate, this is a point on which we may look forward to an early report from the Public Health Committee.

Perhaps the most striking, certainly the saddest, fact to be gleaned from any set of urban vital statistics is the appalling mortality of children of tender age. In London the proportion of children who died during 1904 before reaching the age of 12 months was 144 per 1,000, or one in every seven. Although London compares favourably, in this respect, with other large English towns, yet it is terrible to think of the enormous waste of life and energy revealed by these



figures. The means by which we may hope to reduce this annual loss are mostly indirect, and consist in influencing the minds of the rising generation by the careful inculcation of the principles of hygiene, and the instruction of the future mothers of the race in such subjects as home-nursing. The Council is, however, entrusted with a few duties bearing directly on the problem, such as the duty of supervising houses where infants are put out to nurse. During the year 332 dwellings, in which 1,043 children were received, were under inspection. The Council has come to the conclusion that the law requires amendment, and in the course of the year made certain suggestions to the Home Secretary with this object, but without result.

The Council has also recently been entrusted with duties in connection with the supervision of midwives, including the investigation of charges of malpractice, negligence or misconduct on the part of midwives.

The conditions under which people spend their working hours have an important bearing on the public health. The regulation of these conditions is of very varied nature and is only in some few respects dealt with by the Council. In connection with the enforcement of the Shop Hours Act, 123,248 inspections of 33,232 premises were made during the year. 6,716 irregularities were discovered, but only in 50 cases was it necessary to institute legal proceedings. 14,024 shops were inspected in connection with the requirement as to providing seats for shop assistants. Under both heads the Council's duties are in addition to those which it originally possessed.

The question of the conditions under which children should be employed is of grave importance, and careful consideration was given during the year to the restrictions which should be placed on the employment of children. As a result the Council framed certain by-laws on the subject, and submitted them to the Home Secretary for confirmation.

Before leaving the question of conditions of labour it may perhaps be convenient to refer to the fact that, having regard to the evils connected with some employment agencies, the Council decided during the year to apply to Parliament for powers in connection with governesses' and domestic servants' registries and to theatrical and music hall agencies.

The economic and social forces of the present day tend powerfully towards the concentration of the population in large towns. Especially is this so in the case of London, whose magnetic influence on the workers in the provinces has furnished many a theme. If allowed to operate undisturbed, the effects of this concentration, combined with the natural growth of the population, are that the people crowd closer and closer together, to the detriment of health and comfort, and the growth of physical, moral and social degeneration. The central parts of the city become more and more congested, all available space is



occupied by buildings, and houses which were originally constructed for the use of a single family have to serve the purposes of a whole colony. Although, however, in particular instances the condition of affairs is sad in the extreme, counteracting forces are, happily, at work, and I propose to direct attention to those methods, which the municipal authorities of London are actually employing in wrestling with this serious problem.

These methods may be divided into two classes.

The first class of measures consists of those having for their object the mitigation of actual, or the prevention of possible, overcrowding by dispersing the population by means of improved methods of transit between the industrial centres and the less crowded districts. In a city of large distances, this dispersion can only be effectively carried out if the means of transit afforded are both cheap and speedy. (Not, however, that we wish by the provision of rapid locomotion available for all to realise the nightmare of Ruskin when he saw "cities in which the streets are not the avenues for the passing and procession of a happy people, but the drains for the discharge of a tormented mob, in which the only object in reaching any spot is to be transferred to another.") In this connection the provision of sufficient cheap railway accommodation for workmen is of the greatest importance. During the past year the Board of Trade, as the result of representations made by the Council, held an enquiry into the provision of workmen's trains on the London, Tilbury and Southend Railway. Some startling evidence was given, but the decision of the Board of Trade, which has only recently been made known, does not require such drastic changes as might have been expected. The Council has also made similar representations with regard to the provision afforded on the South-Eastern and Chatham Railway. In all such cases the Council's powers are confined to making representations to the Board of Trade, but in its tramways the Council possesses the actual means of providing cheap and speedy transit. Of the 115 miles of tramways within the county,  $97\frac{1}{2}$  miles were owned by the Council on 31st March, 1905. Of these the Council itself worked 47 miles, of which  $26\frac{1}{4}$  miles have already been adapted for electric traction. This is a necessity for rendering the tramways a more speedy means of transit than would otherwise be possible, and among other advantages enables a much greater number of people to be accommodated. The total number of passengers carried during the year was 164,818,560, or 31,679,475 more than in the previous twelve months. The fares that are in operation are low; and special facilities are given to work-people, extensive workmen's car services with a maximum fare of 1d. single, 2d. return or double-journey, being in force on all the lines.

The power for working the Council's tramways is still obtained from temporary sources of supply, but the erection of the generating station

at Greenwich is proceeding apace, and when the first portion is finished, which it is anticipated will be early next year, power will be available at less cost than has hitherto been the case. With a view to securing at the earliest possible moment, for the residents in districts served by the Council's northern tramways, the advantages already in part possessed by south Londoners, the Council was for some time during the year under review in negotiation with the North Metropolitan Tramways Company, to whom the northern lines are leased, for the surrender of its lease to the Council. These negotiations have since been brought to a successful termination.

In addition to its ordinary surface lines, London will soon be in possession of a shallow underground tramway. The original intention was to construct this from Southampton-row to the Victoria Embankment, and it would thus have afforded the inhabitants of Pentonville and further east an opportunity of diversifying their ordinary modes of recreation with an occasional journey from their crowded districts to the very different scenes of the Embankment. Up to the present, however, the Council has only obtained power to construct the tramway as far as the Strand, and in this curtailed form the scheme is fast approaching completion. The view of the possible use of this tramway which I have put before you leads me to draw attention to the facilities which the Council's tramways afford in providing easy access to the parks and commons of London, nearly the whole of which, with the exception of the central parks, are situated upon, or within a short distance of the tramway routes. The natural relation of the two services of parks and tramways is well shown in the United States, where nearly 300 tramway companies own and manage public parks as an integral portion of their undertakings.

The Council is at present incurring large expenditure in connection with the improvement of its tramways, and this will be greatly increased in the near future. The immediate electrification of the northern system is a work to which the Council should apply itself with the utmost energy. The cost will be something between four and five millions, but we may, I think, feel assured that the financial results will be satisfactory. These, however, are not everything. The better health and increased comfort of the community that will result are of immense value, although necessarily difficult to express in pounds, shillings and pence.

The policy which the Council has pursued with regard to traffic communication and tramways during the last sixteen years has since been embodied in the Report made by the Royal Commission on Traffic Communication. We should not have dared to place such a huge scheme before London as their proposals involve. This is not because the Council is unconscious of the needs of London, for who could be more sensible of those needs than those who are elected every three years

from all parts of London by the people for whom traffic facilities are needed?

Our Highways Committee for many years past have had before them in one form or another all the points which seem to have influenced the Royal Commission; and it must be gratifying to those members of the Council who have made a special study of traffic communication to find that so high an authority as the Royal Commission recommend in a large degree the policy which the Council has pursued in locomotion and transit matters during the sixteen years of its existence.

The Council has year after year promoted large extensions of tramway, believing that the present system of London was entirely inadequate. It has year after year promoted bills for the construction of lines across the bridges to connect the two islands of tramway in the north and the south. The Report of the Royal Commission declares that, "The tramways system of London is disconnected and insufficient," and says further that it should be "largely extended, and the portions of the tramway system that are now isolated should be linked together, through communication being provided from east to west and from north to south." The Report further says, "Tramways should run through from side to side of London so far as possible, and termini in the streets and central districts should be avoided." This is the very policy which has inspired the Council to come before Parliament six times with the Westminster-bridge scheme, in order not only to effect through communication but to abolish the dead-end which has for so long formed an obstruction in the crowded Westminster Bridge-road.

The Council has ever since its creation conceived and carried out bold schemes of street improvement, upon which the crown has been placed by the recent completion of the noble Kingsway. The Royal Commission points out that, "the main obstacle to improvement in means of locomotion is the narrowness of the streets," and recommends a comprehensive plan for the improvement of streets and roads.

Again, as far back as 1902 the Council obtained powers for the construction of the first shallow tramway sanctioned in this country, which is now nearing completion. The Commission now reports to the effect that shallow tramways are preferable to tube railways where special circumstances do not render them impracticable.

In view of the concurrence of the Commission in the Council's views, is it to be wondered at that many of us upon the Council should be of opinion that the best tribunal for dealing with the great question of traffic communication is the London County Council?

Before passing from the subject of means of transit, I must briefly refer to the new permanent means of intercommunication which, as a result of the Council's exertions, London now possesses: a steam-boat service on the river. The service was, it is true, only inaugurated



this summer, but the successful contest before Parliament was fought, and most of the preliminaries for the service were completed, during the year under review. Not only will the service during a great part of the year afford a cheap and healthful source of recreation, but it will at all times serve to meet the demand for additional means of communication across and along the river, especially below London-bridge.

The measures comprehended under the second class comprise (a) sanitary supervision of house property conducted by the metropolitan borough councils, and (b) the closure and demolition of insanitary buildings and rehousing of the people displaced under Parts I. and II. of the Housing Act, 1890. The larger schemes of this description are carried out by the Council.

During the past year the Council has been engaged in the execution of five such schemes, involving the displacement of 4,218 persons and the provision of rehousing accommodation for 4,434 persons. Up to the end of the year the Council had, under Parts I. and II. of the Act, demolished insanitary property, covering an area of 29 acres, displaced 12,290 persons, and provided accommodation for 13,932 persons. Up to 31st March, 1905, the Council had incurred a net capital expenditure of £964,748 in respect of the clearance of insanitary property, and of £765,821 for the erection of working class dwellings upon the cleared sites. The latter figure, however, is of the nature of remunerative expenditure, the income derived from rents more than meeting the debt charges.

In addition there is the action which the Council can take under Part III. of the Housing Act, 1890. This action consists in providing (generally independently of displacement) houses on the outskirts of the county and must therefore be taken in strict conjunction with the spread of the traffic facilities just referred to. Under its powers in this behalf the Council has undertaken twelve schemes, involving the housing of 70,424 persons, 65,932 of whom are to be accommodated on the outskirts of, or a short distance beyond the county boundary, in cottage dwellings. At the close of the year accommodation had either been actually provided or was in course of provision for 10,425 persons. It is not necessary to insist on the immense advantages, from all points of view, that may be expected to result from the housing of the people in single self-contained cottages, each with its own garden. In the case of the cottages at Tooting, the advantages of a direct and speedy means of communication (in this instance the Council's trams) are admirably illustrated, the large majority of the inhabitants being employed in the central parts of London. Before leaving entirely the question of housing, it may be mentioned that the Council has during the year provided accommodation for 6,742 persons of the working class, of which accommodation for 4,130 persons represents that completed for those displaced in connection with



street improvements, etc. This makes a total of 31,339 persons housed or rehoused by the Council since 1889. Apart from the accommodation I have mentioned being provided, there are two ideas to bear in mind, namely, that the houses erected by the Council help to establish a higher standard of living accommodation for the poorer classes, and that it will establish a fixity of rent. This will be of immense importance in the future, just as, if such a policy had been carried out many years ago, the rents of to-day would have been no higher than those of the date when the buildings were erected. It will be obvious, therefore, that the beneficial results of the Council's policy must be very far reaching. Progress was, during the year, made with the lodging-house at Kemble-street, which is to accommodate 699 persons. The two lodging-houses already erected by the Council contain accommodation for 1,147 persons.

The Council's duties with regard to the other common lodging-houses of London, which accommodate about 29,000 persons, were imposed in 1894. During the year 436 applications for licences were dealt with, 379 of which were granted; 31,812 inspections were made, of which 2,587 were night inspections. It is satisfactory to learn that, with few exceptions, the requirements which the Council has made with regard to health matters have been completed in all the houses.

It is safe to say that no feature of the Council's work is so generally known and appreciated as the preservation and maintenance of parks and open spaces, which is another branch of health administration for London. Not that this duty in London falls on the Council alone, for His Majesty's Government and the Metropolitan Borough Councils all co-operate in the work. Altogether London is very well served with parks and open spaces, there being over 7,000 acres under public control within the county, while there are 7,350 acres outside the county under the control of London municipal authorities. To the 107 places with an acreage of 4,921, there have been added during the year under review  $20\frac{1}{3}$  acres. The Council has, moreover contributed sums amounting in all to £136,565 towards the purchase of laying out of land for recreation grounds to be maintained by other authorities.

The principal events of the year were the actual acquisition of Springfield Park, which had been determined upon in the preceding year, and the decision to acquire about 80 acres of land adjoining the north-west boundary of Hampstead Heath (the Council's contribution being £8,000) and 24 acres at Denmark-hill (towards which the Council is to contribute £25,000).

During the last sixteen years the Council has expended on capital account a total sum of about £1,046,000 in connection with parks and open spaces, and the annual cost of maintenance amounts to about £125,000. Concerning the wisdom of this expenditure there

can be no two opinions. The opportunities offered for fresh air and innocent enjoyment make the parks and open spaces a most powerful factor in the maintenance of the public health of a city, and, by their attractions, tend to counteract the temptations to other and more harmful excitements which assail the harassed worker after his day's labour. Not the least beneficial of the uses to which the parks may be put is the provision of means of physical recreation. City life promotes physical degeneration, but we are told by the Inter-Departmental Committee, which recently considered the subject, that one of the antidotes which must be administered to this disease is the provision and maintenance of open spaces in some proportion to the density of the population, and the inclusion in some, at any rate, of such open spaces, of shelters fitted with gymnastic apparatus. In this connection it may be interesting to note that the Council has established 31 gymnasias in its parks.

That the Council has done much in providing means for physical recreation must, I think, be admitted by all who examine the figures. Cricket and football are, of course, the favourite pastimes, and, in addition to the grounds available for use without special permission, 444 and 226 reserved pitches respectively were specially prepared. The applications for the use of these pitches on Saturday afternoons averaged 520 and 362 respectively. Facilities for golf, lawn tennis, hockey, lacrosse, croquet, bowls and quoits, among other popular games, are also provided. At four parks boating is carried on. The action of the Council in dispensing with the boating contractors continues to afford good results, a net profit of £1,540 having been made during the last year. This is considerably more than the sum which the Council would have received from the late contractors, and in addition the public have the benefit of a cheapened and popularised service.

Parks have also their educational uses, and these the Council has decided to extend by carrying out in a more thorough, systematic and uniform manner the labelling of the various tree and shrubs.

It will be remembered that a distinguished economist once wrote :— "Among the means to a higher civilisation, I unhesitatingly declare that the deliberate cultivation of public amusement is a principal one." While the Council has not seen its way to act entirely in accordance with the detailed suggestions which Professor Jevons made, such as the erection of concert halls in the parks, where musical and other entertainments could be given all the year round, it has, nevertheless, carried out in the most comprehensive way the provision of free open-air concerts during the summer months. On the Council coming into office it was without power to incur expenditure in connection with the maintenance or subsidising of bands. This power it took the earliest opportunity of seeking, and last year a sum of £11,564 was spent on bands.

Opportunities of wholesome and in this case remunerative recreation are also afforded by the Council in the provision of small holdings and allotments under the powers given to it in 1892. During the year under review over 95 acres of land were cultivated by about 800 persons. The Council is still hampered in its work by its failure to secure the passing of its Bill to apply the Allotments Acts to the County of London.

We may hope that these precautions against the spread of physical degeneration will also play a part in the prevention of that mental degeneracy which is one of the most difficult problems with which modern civilisation is confronted. The Council's work in this connection becomes heavier and more responsible with each succeeding year. The number of insane persons for whose care and control the Council was responsible in 1890 was 10,100, while the accommodation that had been provided was 7,270 beds. Since that time the figures have increased to 18,168 persons and 17,060 beds on 1st January, 1905. It will be seen, therefore, that though the accommodation provided by the Council has increased by no fewer than 9,790 beds, it is not even yet equal to the demand. Special efforts are being made to overtake the Council's responsibilities, and building works are in progress or contemplation which will provide accommodation for 4,591 patients.

In pushing forward with this provision, however, the Council has not lost sight of the necessity for proceeding abreast of the times in regard not only to methods of treatment but also to the type of accommodation provided. In the latter respect the Council is now about to set an example to other English authorities in departing from the standard of asylum construction hitherto adopted, for the eleventh asylum (the seventh to be entirely built by the Council) is proposed to be constructed on the "villa" system. The Asylums Committee express the belief that the more home-like surroundings of such an asylum, as compared with the present "barrack" type of building, will have a beneficial effect on the patients.

During the last six years the Council has also had duties to perform, of a somewhat different character, towards those who have, for the time, lost the power of resistance to the temptations of alcohol. The Council's reformatory for female inebriates at Farmfield has been practically full throughout the year, and a fair proportion of those discharged appears to be doing well.

I pass now to a consideration of the Council's activities in ensuring the security of life, limb and property. The London County Council Fire Brigade, if not the largest, is one of the finest organisations of its kind in the world. Its duties are not entirely confined to fire extinction, for it also does much useful work in the inspection of certain buildings with a view to fire prevention. But the Council has not yet adopted the practice of a continental city (Florence) in



imposing upon its fire brigade, among numerous other duties whose connection with fire extinction is somewhat remote, the duty of climbing through the windows of houses on behalf of householders who have accidentally shut themselves out without a key.

During the year 1904 the brigade attended 3,616 fires. One member of the brigade lost his life in the execution of his duty. The number of serious fires, however, was 67, that is to say only 1·85 per cent. of the total number of fires in the year. This is a most important and encouraging result, which is contributed to on the one hand by the stringency of the by-laws and regulations which the Council has framed with a view to the prevention of fire from various causes, and on the other hand to the promptitude and efficiency of the fire brigade.

The Council is proceeding methodically with the scheme, involving an expenditure of nearly a quarter of a million, adopted in 1898, for meeting the needs of London by the provision and fitting up of additional fire stations. During the last seven years, however, buildings have been springing up in districts which were quite open, and we are told that an extension of the scheme will be necessary in the near future. Besides the additional fire stations that are required, there are numerous instances in which existing stations are too small or in other respects unsuitable for modern needs, and the Fire Brigade Committee allude to no less than ten cases where steps have been or are being taken for the erection of new stations in substitution for old ones. New stations are in every way adapted for a rapid "turn out." In other respects also, such as provision of new and different appliances (including motor appliances), the brigade is keeping pace with the needs of London.

Attention has been devoted to the question of bringing about some uniform method of indicating the positions of fire-alarm posts fixed in the streets. As a step in this direction, it has been decided to obtain a number of cast-iron fire-alarm indicators which will be supplied free of cost to those metropolitan borough councils, sixteen in number, which have agreed to fix them to lamp-posts and maintain them.

The Council has many duties with regard to prevention of fire and provision of means of escape in case of fire. In carrying out the London Building Act such questions as the provision of fire-resisting materials, and the thickness and description of walls for prevention of fires, have to be dealt with. Moreover, in the case of new buildings over 60 feet in height, and of factories and workshops where more than 40 persons are employed, the Council has to see that means of escape in case of fire are provided. No less than 753 cases of the latter kind were dealt with, or partially dealt with, during the year. It is calculated that in 1901 there were 560,000 persons employed in factories and workshops in London, the greater portion of these being in premises outside the Council's jurisdiction. The safety of such a



large number of persons is a matter of the highest importance, and the Council considered that some steps should be taken to increase the proportion of premises over which it exercises control.

More important, because affecting the safety of much larger aggregations of persons, are the Council's duties with regard to theatres and music halls. The licensing of theatres is, by an anomaly, divided between the Council and the Lord Chamberlain, but the Council licenses all music halls. The Council is the statutory authority for exercising control over the structure of all theatres and music halls. Moreover, the Lord Chamberlain, in his capacity as licensing authority, has given the Council most valuable support in its endeavours to increase the safety of the theatres licensed by his lordship, and there is therefore complete consistency and uniformity of method in dealing with places of public entertainment in London, so far as relates to matters affecting public safety. At the licensing sessions in 1904, 347 applications for licenses were dealt with. A comprehensive code of regulations for the erection of new theatres and music halls; periodical inspection of all places, whether licensed by the Lord Chamberlain or the Council; special regulations and precautions in the case of electric lighting and heating, limelight, acetylene gas, and cinematographs; supervision of storage of dangerous and explosive substances; the requirement that all scenery is to be made fire-resisting and all theatres and music halls to be placed in direct telephonic communication with the fire brigade—these form part of the Council's system for the protection of the public. Their effect may perhaps be seen in the comparative immunity from fire which these places enjoy in London. The detailed survey of the older and less satisfactory buildings is proceeding as rapidly as circumstances will permit, and there is not now a theatre or a music hall in London where a fire resisting curtain has not been provided to cut off the auditorium from the stage. The two patent theatres of Drury-lane and Covent-garden are not licensed by either the Lord Chamberlain or the Council. As regards the latter theatre all the Council's suggestions are being carried out by agreement. In the case of Drury-lane, appeal was made against the Council's requirements, but it is satisfactory to observe that they also have been substantially carried out.

Common lodging houses and Government buildings are periodically inspected by the Fire Brigade, and the principle may be extended to other public buildings in the near future.

The bitter experience of Paris testifies to the very serious consequences which may follow an outbreak of fire on an electric underground railway. In such an event the brigade could be of practically no avail. The Board of Trade has, however, made certain requirements with regard to the construction of such railways, and has intimated that it will require promoters to produce an expression of

opinion on the part of the chief officer of the Fire Brigade as to the sufficiency of the fire appliances provided.

We have seen that the Council possesses duties with regard to fire extension, fire prevention, and provision of means of escape. The duty, however, of providing means for re-instating property after destruction by fire, *i.e.*, fire insurance, although in its origin in London, and at the present time in some foreign cities, a municipal function, is now in London in the hands of private companies. The insurance of municipal property out of their own funds is carried out to some extent by some English municipalities, but it will be remembered that the Council's attempt three years ago to obtain powers to establish a scheme for the mutual insurance of buildings in London used for municipal purposes was unsuccessful. One result of the Education Act, however, was to place in the Council's hands an insurance fund, established by the School Board for London, covering all ordinary risks in respect of property used for educational purposes, and amounting to about £58,000, with an annual income of about £1,500. The principle of the fund has since been applied to other property of the Council.

There are several matters in which the Council performs the duty of looking after the interests of the public in the smaller things of life. Thus in the case of the supply of light it carefully watches the lighting power of the gas supplied in London by the three principal companies, and has also in many cases powers with regard to testing the supply of energy provided by electric light undertakers. It was decided during the year to take steps to secure an amendment of the law relating to gas testing in London.

As regards the quantity, as contrasted with the quality of the light supplied, the Council during the year tested 229,145 gas meters and 1,768 electricity meters. The figures for the Council's first year of office were 80,538 and 0 respectively.

The consumer is moreover indebted to the Council for receiving just measure in the ordinary commodities of life. 1,868,913 new weights, weighing appliances and measures were tested during the year, and 369,299 were rejected, and 1,412,611 appliances, etc., actually in use were inspected, 32,001 being found to be unjust. 627 cases of offences with regard to the sale of coal were discovered. With a view to getting the admittedly defective state of the law with regard to the sale of bread remedied, the Council determined to promote legislation on the subject, but the attempt was unsuccessful.

Among duties of the Council which are comparatively little known is that of preparing schemes regulating the holding of Quarter Sessions in London and of dealing with the two sessions houses. During the year representations were made to the Council that the scheme in force should be revised, and that in the new scheme provision should be made for Quarter Sessions to be held at one place

only. The latter suggestion was not adopted by the Council, and the former suggestion was under consideration at the end of the year.

There are, in addition, a large number of small duties which fall to the Council's lot, most of which it would not be possible to refer to without unnecessarily occupying your time. There may, however, be mentioned the duty recently thrown upon the Council of registering motor cars, which has attained somewhat large proportions. During the year under review, 3,057 motor cars and 1,900 motor cycles were registered, while 8,610 new licences to drive motor cars or motor cycles were granted, and 3,271 old licences renewed. General identification marks were issued to 87 manufacturers or dealers, while 114 such identification marks already in use were renewed. In all, no fewer than 9,496 cars and cycles had been registered up to 31st March, 1905, while to the present time 3,652 more have been added, making a total to date of 13,148.

Among other comparatively new duties performed by the Council may be mentioned its historical work in connection with the erection of memorial tablets on houses formerly occupied by distinguished individuals. During the year seven such tablets were fixed.

One of the most valuable of the Council's publications is the annual volume of *London Statistics*. Its usefulness, however, has been somewhat marred by its awkward size, and in future its contents will be modified and it will be issued in a more handy form.

The maintenance of the Horniman Museum devolved upon the Council in 1901, and steps have been taken to make it an institution of educational value. During the year the exhibits were partly rearranged, several penny handbooks were published, and lectures were given on subjects illustrated by the museum collections.

I now turn to those services of the Council which are of a domestic nature. And, first, as to the Council's staff. The Council will, I am sure, agree with me when I say most emphatically that the service of London is extremely fortunate in the staff upon which it relies. I know of no body of men whose devotion to work and the keenness of whose interest in the welfare of that mighty London which they serve are more strikingly conspicuous than in the case of the staff of the London County Council. These are no words of perfunctory commendation when applied to officials of the Council in whatever branch of the Council's work they are engaged, and they apply equally to those whose field of activity lies widely severed from the centre of administration here in Spring Gardens as to those whose daily work brings us into close and personal relations with them. We should, I think, rejoice to be able so to speak of our officials, and the importance of the spirit which animates them can hardly be over-estimated.

The many and constant additions which have been and are being made to the duties of the Council causes the Council's staff of officials ever to increase in number. The number of officials on yearly



salaries at the central offices in 1889 was 164. At the end of the year under review it was 1,188, the total number of the staff at the Central Offices being 1,883. Of these 508 were housed in the main building, 612 were accommodated at the Education Offices on the Victoria Embankment, and the remaining 763 were scattered throughout various offices in the neighbourhood. And in connection with this question of office accommodation I have a grievance against the Council; for whereas the inconvenience of the present multiplicity of offices and the pressing need for the erection of an adequate County Hall were things upon which my predecessors have, one and all, been able to exercise their powers of condemnation and imagination, I am the first chairman who has to deliver an annual address after the Council has banished this topic by its recent decision to take the necessary steps for the erection of a County Hall on the southern side of Westminster Bridge. There are few more important steps towards securing efficiency of service than this which the Council has happily taken. It remains only for the Council to proceed energetically with the completion of this scheme which will remove, I hope, for ever, the serious difficulties of location which have hitherto imperilled the efficiency of the Council's administration. In some cases, however, it is to be noted that decentralisation may in its turn tend to economy. This has been the case in connection with the printing, stationery and bookbinding contracts which were terminated during the year under review. Fresh contracts have been entered into, and the sub-division of one of the stationery contracts has been the means of saving several hundred pounds a year. The work in connection with the supply and issue of stores generally has also been much increased by the requirements of the educational work of the Council. Satisfactory arrangements have, however, been made in spite of the pressure of work involved.

Perhaps one of the most remarkable events of the year has been the success achieved by the Works Committee under the able chairmanship of Mr. Torrance. I think every member of the Council will allow me to go so far as to say that the Works Committee have during the last year overcome all criticism. At all events, their success, judged merely on the question of quality of work performed and cost to the ratepayers, has been assured. For, during the last year, the Works Department executed work to the amount of £223,655 15s. 5d. Both as regards estimated and jobbing works, the actual cost was below the final estimate of the chief officer concerned to a total amount of £18,631 2s. 4d. I think I ought to say that the Council has been extremely fortunate in securing the services of the works manager, Mr. Humphreys, whose energy and ability, together with the untiring efforts of the Chairman of the Works Committee, have contributed in no small degree to bring about this satisfactory result.

I have left to the last the most extensive branch of the Council's



service—that dealing with education. The outstanding feature of the year has, of course, been the enormous increase, practically a doubling the Council's work, caused by the passing of the Education Acts, 1902-3. Ever since 1892, when the Technical Education Board was first constituted, the Council has had wide and varied duties in connection with the provision of technical instruction throughout London. This work consisted in the maintenance of 12 institutions in which instruction was given in science and technology, and in aiding by means of grants technical instruction provided throughout London by other bodies. On 1st May, 1904, however, the Council first became responsible for the administration of the whole of the elementary school work previously done by the School Board for London. This work consisted in the provision of elementary school accommodation and the maintenance of elementary instruction in 521 schools, having an aggregate average attendance of 485,343 scholars. Further, on the same date there was placed upon the Council the responsibility for the maintenance and efficiency of no fewer than 438 voluntary schools with 175,408 scholars. In addition, wide powers for the provision of higher (including secondary) education were given to the Council, and the same Act made the Council the statutory authority for securing and preserving the due co-ordination of all forms of education in London whether elementary, secondary or higher. Here then is a branch of the Council's service where honourable members may satisfy their appetite for work. And of what nature is this work which without our request, without our consent, has been so lavishly showered upon us? What is the nature of the duties which in education may help to occupy the time of the 137 members who compose this Council? Nothing less than the solution of the problem of providing and utilising the best means for producing the future citizens of London. Nothing less than the immense task of developing the capacity of London's children in such a way as best to fit them for their life's struggle and their part in the life's work of the mightiest city of this vast empire. Surely this is a work which none can undervalue, and a task whose execution must demand and tax the best energies of every member of the public body to which it is entrusted. That the Council has realised this I do not doubt, and with this in mind, perhaps the Council will bear with me while I touch broadly on some of the salient features of the new work which we have undertaken. I do not, of course, propose to deal to-day with the mass of detailed business which is transacted by the Education Committee week by week, nor shall I attempt to mention all the sufficiently important matters which at another time, or were I dealing with education alone, I might be tempted to dwell upon.

As is required by the Statute, an Education Committee was duly appointed by the Council and the work of this committee has been performed, and the committee have been treated in every way as are the work and other committees of the Council. For the administration and execution of the work under its direction, the Council appointed an Educational Adviser and an Executive Officer and continued the services of the majority of the staff, both of the late School Board for London and of the Technical Education Board. The inspectorial staff has been entirely reorganised under a chief inspector; the duties and personnel of the external staff, both administrative and teaching, have, however, generally been maintained as they were before the appointed day.

I have already drawn attention to the responsibility cast upon the Council for the maintenance and efficiency of non-provided schools. In view of the well-known condition of these schools, the Council deemed it advisable that their managers should know that its action in at once undertaking these duties was provisional only, and an investigation into the structural condition and educational efficiency of the schools was at once put in hand. This survey and inspection, which has been conducted with the assistance of the ripe experience of the architect of the late School Board, Mr. Bailey, had actually been completed at the end of the year under review. The detailed consideration which had not at that time passed from the Education Committee made an extraordinary demand on the time of members. With these details the Council is now familiar. But although the Council is responsible for the maintenance and efficiency of all non-provided schools in London, the actual management of these schools is in the hands of a special body of men composed of four persons called foundation managers, appointed under an Order of the Board of Education from among those who were managers on 1st May, 1904; and two other persons, one of whom is appointed by the Council and one by the council of the metropolitan borough within which the school is situated.

In due course the Council received copies of the draft final orders which the Board of Education proposed to make with regard to the appointment of foundation managers. The provisions of the draft final orders form the subject of somewhat lengthy reports to the Council and protracted correspondence with the Board of Education. In addition to other defects of a more or less important character, it appeared to the Council that the machinery proposed for the appointment of foundation managers was out of accord with the principle of popular control. In these circumstances the Council rightly felt that it was its duty to make such representations to the Board of Education as would, if possible, induce them so to alter the provisions of the draft orders as to bring them into harmony with this principle. The Board of Education, however, did not see

their way, except in small details in particular cases, to act in accordance with the Council's representations.

The Council found, at an early date, that at many of the non-provided schools fees of varying amounts were being charged for instruction. A very short experience of this practice was sufficient to convince the Council that the principle that elementary education provided by the public for the public should be free was the correct principle to be applied in London. Accordingly, education in all public elementary schools maintained by the Council, has been free as from 31st March, 1905.

It may interest members to know that the cost of educating each child at a London school for the year 1902-3 worked out at £4 1s. 3½d. a year, while a child at a non-provided school cost £2 13s. 10d. a year. This difference was mainly due to the fact that the staff provided by the late School Board was on a more generous scale than that supplied by the managers of the non-provided schools. Let me compare these figures with similar results in the provinces and abroad. In the rest of England the corresponding figures for Council schools are £2 15s. 7¾d., while for Leeds they are £2 19s. and for New York £6 6s. 6½d., and for the United States generally £3 10s. 5d. For Germany and France the figures for what correspond to Council schools are £2 17s. 1d. and £2 9s. 2d.

This comparison shows that the cost per head of elementary instruction in provided schools in London is greater than anywhere else—New York excepted. But we have not only inherited a cost per head per child greater than any other part of the country: we have also inherited a system of education which everyone recognises must, if London is to be brought up to the level of other towns, be greatly extended in the immediate future. This places the London County Council, the new authority to whom this duty has been entrusted, in a very difficult position. If this £4 1s. 3d. per head represented a system of education which placed London in the forefront with its educational advantages we might be less concerned, but when we are forced to recognise that the system of education in London is far behind that of many other communities, it will be realised what a serious responsibility, financially and educationally, came upon the Council with the passing of the Education Acts.

Another difficulty in connection with the maintenance of elementary schools is the dearth of teachers. I need not enter into the causes which produced that dearth; I prefer to state how the difficulties have been met. And first I must deal with the pupil teacher.

Owing to the change that has been made by the Board of Education in their regulations, the old system of apprenticing pupil teachers at an early age has disappeared. This change was made in May, 1904, and necessitated an immediate modification of the arrangements



existing under the late School Board for London, which consisted briefly in engaging probationers and paying them wages in their second and subsequent year as pupil teachers. To overcome the difficulty this created, the Council provided 1,200 probationer scholarships for boys and girls between the ages of 14 and 16 who desired to become pupil teachers, and who would undertake to enter the teaching profession on the completion of the scholarship course. Due provision has been made for the apprentice year between 16 and 18 years of age.

The Council's duties, however, as local education authority, go farther than this. Not only must the Council provide means to enable a start to be made in the direction of the teaching profession, it must also provide for the completion of that training, which will result in a fully-qualified teacher. To this end the provision of training colleges must be undertaken, and I think that the Council will not hesitate in this matter when once it is convinced of the necessity for expenditure thereon. Indeed, the Council has already taken a not inconsiderable share in the provision of such accommodation in London up to the present time. Thus, the London Day Training College, established by the late Technical Education Board, is still at work; while the classes for teachers initiated by the late School Board for London at Greystoke-place, have been developed also into a day training college, and active steps have been taken to secure the necessary Parliamentary powers to enable the Council to devote the magnificent mansion at Avery Hill, which belonged to the late Colonel North, to the purposes of both a day and residential training college. These powers were granted by Parliament in the last session.

The provision of training colleges need not, however, rest on the Council alone, and I may instance the fact that the Goldsmiths' Company have recently handed over, for the purposes of a training college, to the University of London, their institute at New Cross, which for the past 12 years has been conducted as the only polytechnic institution in the south-east of London. Advantage will be taken by the Council of the facilities thus afforded for the training of teachers, and the college will be managed by a joint delegacy appointed by the university and consisting partly of members of the senate and partly of nominees of the several local education authorities, including the Council, at whose expense teachers will be trained.

The diversion of this institute from its original purpose of a polytechnic institution was viewed by the Council with some concern; and I cannot help expressing regret that it should have been found necessary thus to disturb the provision which had been made in the south-east of London for technical instruction. The Goldsmiths' Company, however, have to some extent met the wishes of the Council that technical instruction shall not be altogether abandoned,



and this instruction has been continued during the session 1904-5 under the direction of the Council with the aid of a grant of £5,000 from the company. The Council will, I feel sure, desire that this evening instruction shall continue in the future, and indeed it has already made provision for this purpose for the session 1905-6 now upon us.

And now as to Secondary Education. The Council had, through its Technical Education Board, done much to aid existing secondary schools, and has provided completely at least one secondary school out of its own funds. But, as the local education authority, it soon found that it was necessary to make larger provision. To begin with, the Council during the year 1904-5 undertook the revision and extension of the scholarship scheme which had been inaugurated by the Technical Education Board.

Under the new scheme the co-operation of the teachers of public elementary schools, the value of whose knowledge as to the capacity and individuality of the children is fully recognised by the Council, is enlisted. The teachers not only assist in the selection of individuals, but through local scholarship committees take their share in the details of administration of the scheme.

Examinations for Junior County Scholarships are held, but in calculating the results and in awarding scholarships the last school examination and the head teacher's report are given due consideration. In this and other ways the evils of the competitive examination are avoided; no definite limit is therefore put upon the number of scholarships that may be awarded, although it is not expected that in any one year the number will exceed 2,600.

The Junior County Scholarships consist of free education up to the end of the school year in which the scholar attains the age of 14 years, and may be renewed for two more years, provided that the scholar is satisfactory alike in conduct and attainments. They are therefore scholarships in the true sense of the term, but maintenance allowances are attached to them in all cases where such a course is desirable.

The scholarships are tenable in secondary schools, and it will be readily realised that the large increase in the number of scholars for whom secondary accommodation must be found has considerably affected the question of the provision of such accommodation by the Council itself.

The provision of secondary education for successful junior scholars is, however, not limited to the five years during which a junior county scholarship may be tenable. For those who have the capacity for education of a higher kind, 100 intermediate and 50 senior scholarships are provided. These scholarships enable successful candidates to pursue courses of study at higher technical institutes and at the universities.

As to the provision of secondary schools, in the year 1903-4 there were only 16,300 suitable secondary school places in London, of which about 2,800 were available for the Council's scholars.

The bringing into force of the Council's revised scholarship scheme will at once require 1,000 additional secondary school places, and the problem of the accommodation to be provided by the Council becomes therefore a very pressing one.

The number of girls who will, under the scholarship scheme, be awarded scholarships, will be, roughly, twice the number of boys, and it is mainly in the secondary school accommodation for girls that the necessity for further provision has been and will be felt. No steps were actually taken by the Council in this matter during the year under review, but within a very few months of the close of that year the Council was actively engaged in opening no fewer than four separate secondary schools in various parts of London.

In addition, the Council during the year 1904-5 received from the Grocers' Company an offer, as a free gift, of the Company's school for boys, situated at Hackney Downs. This offer has naturally been accepted, and the school will be taken over and managed by the Council as soon as the necessary formalities under the Endowed Schools Act have been satisfactorily completed.

Further, the Council has decided to take over the secondary school in Paddington, known as Queen's Park College, and this school will be carried on in the buildings available at the L.C.C. Paddington Technical Institute.

I come now to that part of education with which the Council has been intimately connected for the past thirteen years—viz., technical education. During the year under review the system of aid grants to polytechnics and other technical institutes has been considerably revised, and the Council has shown its continued sympathy of this branch of education by largely increasing the grants in aid. In this connection I may perhaps be allowed to emphasise the importance of establishing throughout London a system which shall result in the due co-ordination of all such instruction as between evening schools, technical institutes, and polytechnic institutions. This is a matter which has engaged and is engaging the careful attention of the Education Committee, and though at the end of the year under review no definite scheme with this end in view had been formulated, a very practical system has since been evolved and put into operation by the Council in more than one district in London.

While devoting its main attention, however, to questions of such far-reaching influence and prime importance as those which I have but lightly touched upon, the Council, in accordance with its usual policy, has not lost sight of the interests of those who in one capacity or another serve in administering the work of education in London, and schemes for the revision of the salaries of teachers in public

elementary schools, and for the revision of the salaries and duties of the caretakers of these schools, were under consideration at the end of the year 1904-5, and have since been adopted by the Council.

In conclusion, I may say with some degree of certitude that the future of representative government for localities is now assured. Never again shall we get those strange anomalies which existed prior to the great municipal reform of 1835, and I think, too, that we shall escape from the meshes of nominated authorities which grew up after that date. London tried this system under the Metropolitan Board of Works; it is apparently being forced to adopt it in special cases such as water and the unemployed, but even with these examples I do not believe that the representative system is in danger of being superseded anywhere in the United Kingdom, and certainly not in the capital.

The plain fact is that the Council during its past sixteen years has deserved well of London. It is a greater body than the Government who created it thought it was capable of being. It is a greater body than we members of it, close as we are to its work, yet realise. It is in short what the people and the needs of the people have made it. But it has a great problem before it, namely, to prove that a community of five millions of people is a possible unit for local self-government, and to solve this problem it has no example from history, nothing from the researches of philosophers or thinkers. It has simply got to solve it by itself.

To solve such a problem properly there is needed one all-important thing, namely, efficient organisation. When I look at the Council in this respect, I am not satisfied. When I look for a better managed public body I cannot find it. And to this paradox in opinion and fact, I am bound to make a disagreeable addition, namely, that efficiency is not an ideal which has hitherto found as much favour in this country as the needs of the time demand.

Gentlemen, believe me, one of the means to that efficiency is the choice and training of a capable staff. I believe the Council by its wise methods has secured such a staff. But there is danger ahead. London is rightly proud of its chief officers, one and all. Let the Council remember the magnitude of its work, such work as it has been bringing to a successful issue only this last week.

Let it pause to think what the success of this great scheme means to the Council and what it would have been if it had been left to second-rate officers. Problems which involved hundreds of thousands of pounds were at stake, and of these thousands might have been lost by a slip in any of the various items of advice given to the Council by its chief officers—such officers, I mean, as the Valuer, the Chief Engineer, or the Architect. Speaking from this chair as Chairman of the Council, with the many facilities for seeing, which that position gives me, all

that we owe to the Clerk of the Council and to his colleagues, I should feel that I had signally failed in my duty if I did not speak in the highest terms of the devotion, zeal and ability which they infuse into their work, not measuring these qualities by the amount of salary they receive, but by the service which they render to London, and I believe are proud in so rendering. I know full well that the Council will not fail to assess their value to London and pay that value. They are a part of the machinery which must exist side by side with us who are elected to represent what the people of London claim to be accomplished on their behalf and in their name. If we demand for ourselves character and ability, we demand from our officers equal degrees of both, and we must see to it that when we possess them we retain them in the service of London.

London is expected to lead the way in all things municipal. I hope the Council will enable London to lead the way in an efficient organisation, and that when the Council transplants its home to the other side of the Thames an organisation will be available which shall be as perfect as possible in all its branches to carry on the magnificent work which lies ready to the Council's hands.









